

Chadwick angrily crying to Ashley that 'if we are idle, death is not'. It saw the collapse of the railway mania and with it the shipwreck of the Towns Improvement Company. And it saw the termination of the long, sordid history of squabbles inside the Poor Law office in one violent passage between Chadwick and Lewis after which the Commission survived no more.

BOOK SIX

ANDOVER

CHAPTER I

ALL IS NOT WELL AT THE POOR LAW OFFICE

IT is surprising to realize that during these four years Chadwick still held the position of Secretary at the Poor Law office. Why he was never dismissed is an interesting matter for speculation. Head and Lewis were not above discussing whether or not he would leave the office in disgust, but they never went so far as to consider removing him.¹ Probably Graham stood in their way; and if he did so, we may be sure that it was out of no love for Chadwick but doubtless from a wholesome fear of what embarrassing secrets the offended ex-Secretary might reveal.

So for full five years Chadwick occupied a totally anomalous position, in the Poor Law office but not of it. His room was in a different part of the building and separated from the Commissioners' offices, and had no access to them. Reached by a separate staircase, it was a room where (as Sir Frankland Lewis picturesquely put it) he could have received half the deputations of London without the Commissioners' knowing of it.² His labours were becoming as distinct from Poor Law matters as his office was from the others. Sanitary problems (if we may adapt Kant), even if they had begun with questions of the poor rate, certainly did not all arise from them; and with each successive Report Chadwick was carried further away from his originally narrow interest in 'keeping the rates down' into the larger and more humane field of the general prevention of disease. The new science carried him along with it into the baser details of a hitherto unexplored sphere of administration, as he turned increasingly from consolidated orders and rating regulations to the novel and revolutionary consideration of the best methods of sewerage, the latest American street-sweeping machine, and the diameters of drains. As the days passed he spent less and less time at the office itself. Sometimes he would absent himself for the day, sometimes for

¹ Andover Enquiry: evidence of E. Head, Qq. 15,096-7.

² Ibid.: T. F. Lewis's evidence, Q. 2231.

the week; on at least one occasion he was months gone from the office.¹ At such times as these he would relinquish what duties he could to the fat and cheerful George Coode, and for the rest perform such indispensable secretarial duties as signing cheques and conducting bank negotiations, by post.²

Indeed he was not allowed to do more than what was required by such perfunctory attendance and such routine administration. His attendance at the Board Meetings, extremely rare even in 1839, ceased altogether.³ The care of the minutes had been taken from him. He was no longer encouraged nor did he ever offer to draft the Annual Reports or draw up the circular letters⁴; and on none but the rarest of occasions, practically never, did the Board come to him for advice on Poor Law questions.⁵ Head and Lewis had got all the business into their own hands, and contemptuously ignored their Secretary, caring, it seems neither for his presence nor his absence.⁶ As for Chadwick, once he recovered from the shock of his early disappointment, he stubbornly refused to resign as he considered this would reflect upon his public capacity.

Chadwick had to content himself with breathing fire at the 'new course' which Head and Lewis lost no time in steering. Whether the changes they made were as drastic as he was inclined to argue is very debatable. To the poor, the difference seemed little enough, and with the workhouse test still figuring bravely in the Annual Reports, the Commissioners continued to pay lip-homage at least to the abolition of the allowance system. In some respects the law may be said to have advanced; in 1844 Lewis succeeded in getting Parliament to adopt most of the recommendations laid down in the 1838 Committee and which had been so repeatedly postponed in the four years following. The superficial outlines, at all events of that 1841 statute which *The Times* had ascribed to Chadwick, such provisions as, for example the union of Unions for audit and education, the classification of pauper lunatics, the setting-up of night asylums for vagrants, were all adopted by Parliament during these years.

Yet it is not at all hard to understand why to Chadwick and the diehard Assistant Commissioners inside the office, these years were years of retreat, of cowardice and 'flinching', and why they incurred his bitter scorn. 'Prudence and practicability' were the words by which Lewis justified his policy. 'I should be glad to see the allowance system extinguished throughout the country . . . but . . . if any attempt were

¹ Letters from H. Owen to Edwin Chadwick, in 1845.

² Andover Enquiry: G. C. Lewis's evidence, Q. 21598.

³ Andover Enquiry: Head's evidence, Q. 15093.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ An inference.

⁶ Ibid.

made suddenly to put an end to (it) in the large manufacturing towns the attempt would probably not be effectual. . . .¹ To Chadwick this was in practice a base desertion of principle, however attractive it might seem as an argument. He agreed with another malcontent, E. C. Tufnell,² as the latter wrote to him, 'Their sole object for the last few years seems to have been to endeavour to act "the poor man's friend"'. You know what that meant under the old system. It was perfectly clear to me that what was always uppermost in their minds was not how they should best perform their duty but how they should appease *The Times* newspaper and mollify by concessions all the objects of the anti-Poor Law agitators . . . a deprecatory paragraph in the newspaper seemed to fill them with direct alarm and they were ready to sacrifice any subordinate officer or any principle of the law it was their duty to enforce, to appease a newspaper clamour or the demands of an anti-Poor Law agitation. I do not believe, from the period I have referred to (viz. the moment Messrs Lewis and Head obtained the guidance of the office) that a single paper has been issued from the office setting forth the correct principles of Poor Law administration. As respected doctrine every document they issued might have been promulgated from *The Times* office and in fact it seemed that the tenor of *The Times* was the prevailing feeling that inspired every sentence of every letter issued to Boards of Guardians. . . .³

In 1842, self-confessedly 'yielding to public opinion', they withdrew the Consolidated Order, even in the pitiful remnant of a dozen Unions where it still operated in its original form. In its stead Lewis succeeded at last in substituting a General Order, one which sheltered behind the authority of Graham's signature at its foot, and which contained those very six exceptions to the prohibition of outdoor relief which Chadwick had successfully fought against in 1840. Medical relief—a sore point with Chadwick, who believed that 'medical relief is the avenue to all pauperism'⁴—was altered ('to quiet the doctors who are very clamorous', confessed Lewis⁵), and altered in such a way that in Tufnell's opinion, 'Persons in the prime of life . . . have been made paupers by the Order, who would otherwise never have received relief'.⁶ Settlement Bills, introduced in 1844 and 1845 similarly elicited from

¹ Andover Enquiry: G. C. Lewis's evidence, Q. 21847.

² E. C. Tufnell to Edwin Chadwick, 28th May 1847 (hereafter called *Resignation Letter*).

³ Ibid.

⁴ The phrase is Tufnell's—in a paper dated 1845, protesting against the Commissioners' relaxation of medical relief (*Examples of Abusive Expenditure*, etc.), cf. p. 158 above.

⁵ Lewis to Grote, 13th March 1842 (*Letters of the Rt. Hon. G. C. Lewis*, p. 119).

⁶ *Examples of Abusive Expenditure*, 1845.

Chadwick the angry note to Peel, that 'I was not consulted with respect to any of the Settlement Bills recently proposed and that if I had been, I could not have done otherwise than remonstrate against them, as I believe the majority of officers engaged in this service must also have done, had their opinions or their experience and observation been consulted. . . .'¹

But it was in the administrative arrangements of the law that Lewis played the greatest havoc with Chadwick's principles. Faced by the rebellious Boards of Guardians Lewis again and again consented to proposals which finally made the power of the Central Board the pale shade of its former self and opened the way for the continuous succession of scandals which culminated—as Chadwick prophesied they would—in the fall of the Commission. 'The "self-government" of such men as Day and Anderson', Chadwick wrote grimly, 'has regained ground to a disastrous extent.'² Bowing to the popular outcry, Lewis had yielded where Chadwick had fought and won. He allowed the Boards of large Unions to break themselves up into local relief committees.³ He dared not press his demand for peremptory power to dissolve the Gilbert Incorporations, and contented himself with the right to nibble them away a parish at a time.

Most fatefully he neglected the pillars of central control—audit and inspection, the two services which alone made the Board's superintendence a real one. With a levity that seems incredible, he not merely yielded to the reactionary cry of 'Less Assistant Commissioners' and 'Economy in the transaction of business', but actually approved the reduction of the Assistant Commissioner staff from the insufficient twelve to the totally inadequate number of nine!⁴ No wonder that Chadwick, pointing on all sides to relapses in the local administration of the law, should cry out, 'Nine Assistant Commissioners, if they were angels, would find it difficult to do more than at present is done in arresting these practices!'⁵ But what aroused in him an even hotter fury was Lewis's truckling to the Guardians in the matter of audit. Obviously in order to assert an effective control, the smaller the number of inspectors, the greater the control the central authority must possess over local accounts. Ever since 1838 Chadwick had urged the central appointment of auditors in large audit districts, in order to reinforce the inspection. Lewis, successful in obtaining the large audit district, threw away the victory by

¹ Edwin Chadwick to Sir Robert Peel, 30th April 1845.

² Edwin Chadwick to J. Longmore, 18th July 1842.

³ In the 1844 Statute.

⁴ Andover Enquiry: G. C. Lewis, Q. 23111.

⁵ Edwin Chadwick to Macvey Napier, 2nd March 1844.

allowing the appointment of auditors to rest in the hands of the local Boards,¹ at which Chadwick commented:

' . . . For my own part, I venture to express a confident opinion, that in the shape in which the measure at present stands, of giving the appointment of auditors to the Guardians whose accounts are to be audited, the poors' rates will be charged with all the expenses of perhaps 100 imperfect appointments which will not be worth the money and will stand in the way of a better arrangement which would be highly popular. . . . We have common accountants acting as district auditors at present who do little or nothing to stop illegal charges which are colourable and I have not met with one Assistant Commissioner who expects that more would be done by the auditors such as it is proposed to appoint. . . .'²

Yet anything in the nature of a formal remonstrance was now almost out of question. Lewis and Head lost no opportunity of showing that the Commission was under 'new management' and that they would brook no interference. Secure in the support of Sir James Graham, they exercised their power in so arbitrary a fashion that not Chadwick alone but the whole office soon seethed with indignation and suppressed feelings of revolt. One gains the impression that they rudely brushed aside the principles and the feelings of any in the Commission who dared disagree with the way they conducted their business.³ Chadwick, naturally, was one of the worst sufferers. Tufnell wondered why he was not dismissed or how he could stay in such a humiliating position.⁴ On occasion Head would discuss with his fellow-Commissioner whether Chadwick would not resign in disgust!⁵ That Lewis should indulge Head in such discussions was not surprising, since the antipathy between himself and Chadwick, far from abating, was notorious throughout the office. Chadwick complained that he had only to make a suggestion for it to be forthwith ignored.⁶ One can surmise the hostility between the two men by the fact that when, in 1844, Lewis married into the powerful Clarendon family, and thus sealed his alliance simultaneously with the Bedford and the Clarendon Whigs, George Coode thought fit to warn Chadwick in alarm:

' . . . It is certain that Mr Lewis is to marry Mrs Lister, the widow of the Registrar-General and sister of Lord Clarendon. . . .

Your connexions are likely to have made this old intelligence to you though it is new to me. However as his star is of malignant aspect—all his alliances and

¹ By the 1844 Statute.

² Edwin Chadwick to Earl of Buccleuch, 20th July 1844.

³ Andover Enquiry: Coode, Parker, Chadwick evidence, *passim*.

⁴ Tufnell's Resignation Letter, 1847.

⁵ Andover Enquiry, Qq. 15093-7 and Qq. 14510-14526.

⁶ Edwin Chadwick to J. Roebuck, 24th March 1845.

consanguinaries are of some interest to you and I would not be responsible for keeping you in ignorance. Otherwise, I know, you think as little as I do of the gossip as to who is to marry or be given in marriage. . . .¹

The man who made this odious persecution possible, and to some extent actually inspired it, was Sir James Graham. Graham indeed was the true well-spring of the Commissioners' power, and with his support they could do anything. Graham's sentiment towards Chadwick was a malicious, deep-seated, and unremitting hostility. He had a fixed opinion that much of the animus towards the Commission sprang directly from the harshness of the Circular Letters which he accused Chadwick of having written. On one particular occasion, when certain individual letters fell under his ban, Lewis did nothing to disabuse his patron of this unfounded conviction, or to reveal that not Chadwick but *he himself* was in this instance the guilty party. He went still further: when Graham made these letters the grounds for a public attack on the 'secretaries' of the Commission, and Chadwick protested, Lewis not only refused to take the matter up with Graham but seized the opportunity of telling Chadwick what Graham really thought of him, not hesitating to conclude, 'You will get no redress from him'.² All that Chadwick could do was to write querulous letters of protest to his old friends, Radnor and Brougham and Lansdowne; but no help came.³ This matter, more than anything else, rankled in his mind for long afterwards⁴; but now he had to sit still under the sharp torment of abiding injustice.

Nicholls, upon returning from Ireland in December 1842, was deeply shocked at the change in Chadwick's position. In 1838, when Nicholls left for Ireland, Chadwick attended Board meetings, his advice was given and taken freely—now he was totally ignored and treated with every variety of contempt. 'Such an exclusion', he wrote, 'must have deeply hurt his feelings, and coupled with the opinion he entertained with respect to the mode of transacting the business of the department, led, I believe, to much of what . . . ensued'; and, covering up by a generalization what in fact was a sharp censure on his colleagues, he concluded, 'The zealous and efficient co-operation of subordinates can only be reckoned on where confidence and support are accorded by the superior. . . .'⁵

¹ G. Coode to Edwin Chadwick, 'Tuesday, October 1844'. Teresa Lister was also the sister-in-law of Lord J. Russell.

² Andover Enquiry: G. C. Lewis, Qq. 21655, 21644-21666, 22003-22023; Edwin Chadwick, 30th July (Qq. 20021-20032).

³ All written, 24th July 1842.

⁴ *Infra*.

⁵ Mackay, *History of Poor Law*, vol. i ('Memoir of Nicholls'), p. lxvi.

Unfortunately for Chadwick, and indeed for all the progressive spirits in the office, it was not long before Nicholls found himself in almost the very position he was condemning. Once again Graham played the prime part in this sinister affair. Graham hated the Irish Poor Law, and his dislike imparted itself to the author. As Lewis had never been very favourable to Nicholls's reports (the 'second is less twaddling than the first'¹ he had said at the time), the stage was set for the exclusion of Nicholls also from sharing in decisions of the Board. When Nicholls, fearing for his position, hurried home from Ireland, he found the door already shut upon him. Repeated calls at the Home Office only elicited the reply that the Home Secretary was too engaged to see him—although Lewis and Head seemed to be having no difficulties in being received. Nicholls wrote formally demanding an interview. Graham replied that he would be informed when it would be possible. No summons ever came and henceforth Nicholls was never invited to the consultations which Graham held so frequently with his colleagues. After Graham's calculated affront, came the turn of the jackals. For what follows one must realize that for the last five years Nicholls had given all his labour to the Irish Poor Law, of which he himself was the author: Lewis roundly said that he thought that law a failure and that it should be liquidated, its workhouses turned from their present purposes into dispensaries and fever hospitals:

'I did not lose my temper at this being said', related Nicholls, 'but turned to Sir Edmund Head for his opinion, who coolly observed that for his part he entirely agreed with Sir James Graham and was altogether opposed to the Irish Poor Law which he thought never ought to have passed, or some equivalent expression. I kept my temper at this also. . . .'²

Only a sense of public duty kept Nicholls from resigning, but henceforth he was virtually excluded from all the important decisions of the Board, decisions which were settled, not at the Board table but in Graham's office, at those interviews to which Nicholls was never invited.³ This, too, was common knowledge in the office: 'You know', Tufnell recalled to Chadwick, 'how he was laid aside. Messrs Lewis and Head treated him as they treated me, and he was deprived of all voice and influence in deciding any of the important questions that came before the Board.'⁴

It was in this way, by settling with Sir James Graham all the business

¹ *Letters of the Rt. Hon. G. C. Lewis*, p. 96.

² For all this, Mackay's 'Memoir', cited above.

³ E.g. Andover Enquiry: Nicholls, Qq. 12942-12950; E. Head, Qq. 14213-14223.

⁴ Tufnell's *Resignation Letter*, 1847.

of the office, over the heads of their colleagues, and often in flat contradiction to the sentiments of their subordinates, that Lewis and Head concentrated all authority in their own hands. Not only Nicholls and Chadwick suffered from this arbitrary rule; the whole staff of Assistant Commissioners also suffered, simmered, and seemed almost on the verge of rebellion. The Commissioners, they found, took no notice and even discouraged all suggestions and even reports which were distasteful to their preconceived notions of what ought to be done. It became a commonplace for an Assistant Commissioner to reply to Chadwick's censure as Mott had replied: 'I cannot help the state of my Unions; I have represented it and more I cannot do'.¹ 'It was the previous practice in the office', said Tufnell, 'in sending letters from local authorities for the opinion of the Assistant Commissioner, to write in the corner, "For Mr A. to suggest answers". I am confident that this was an excellent practice, as it induced the Assistant Commissioner to take the utmost care in framing his replies, the chance of immediate publication being considerable and as he probably knew more of his district than any one in the office, the best available knowledge was brought to bear on the subject'.² (This was *par excellence* Chadwick's notion of the function of the Assistant Commissioners. His 'policy of thorough'—the ruthless application of the Consolidated Order, the extension of the Union machinery, the formation of unions of Unions, indeed every forward step in the application of the law—had all been promised upon the recommendation of the 'man on the spot', the Assistant Commissioner. Even Tufnell, who thought that Chadwick did in some cases want to go 'too fast and too far', gave him full credit for this.) 'When Messrs Lewis and Head began their reforms', continued the disgusted Tufnell, 'they wholly gave up the practice, and, finding that no notice was taken of some carefully written replies that under the former plan would in substance at least have been transmitted as answers to the papers sent, I naturally ceased to take any trouble on the point. I believe that subsequently the replies were usually written by clerks in the office, who, being inferior officers and necessarily less acquainted with the subject, could not be supposed to be in a condition to send equally pertinent answers'.³ Such over-riding of their recommendations caused grave unrest and dissatisfaction throughout the whole inspectorate. Coode told Chadwick that Stephens 'complained bitterly to him of the countenance given to the allowance system, and to old abuses and of the inattention to representation on the subject and

¹ Andover Enquiry: Edwin Chadwick, Q. 19131.

² Tufnell's *Resignation Letter*, 1847.

³ *Ibid.*

such proceedings as to discourage the repression of abuses.'¹ Tufnell talked darkly of 'closet philosophers' who could not and would not learn.² Parker, who had had former occasion to censure the Commissioners' laxity, was told by Lewis that a report on the disgusting state of Cuckfield workhouse should never have been made because 'it would be exceedingly inconvenient to the Commissioners if the reports were afterwards called for in Parliament'.³ Day's reports also caused him annoyance because they were too full of legal technicalities for the office clerks to answer on their own initiative!⁴ Gulson came away from one of his extremely infrequent interviews with the fiery Head bearing the distinct impression that a report he had drawn up on the Unions in what were formerly Head's districts, had caused annoyance to that Commissioner and might prejudice his own position.⁵ As for Clements, Chadwick's recollection of him was that 'he was perpetually preferring complaints to me; at Liverpool (in 1845 *infra*) he told me that he had spoken to all the Assistant Commissioners and that with the exception perhaps of Colonel Wade, who was under peculiar obligations to Mr. G. Lewis, there was not one contented man amongst them. He told me that he found his district an Augean stable, and that he was compelled to leave it so . . . he stated to me his surprise and annoyance at coming to Lancashire to find prevalent there abuses such as there was no notion of in Ireland. . . .'⁶

Had the Board merely discouraged the zeal of their assistants, the latter would no doubt have made discretion the better part of valour and sulked in silence in their tents. It was not this that spread privy conspiracy and an atmosphere of suspicions and discontent throughout the office. The Assistant Commissioners believed that the Commissioners were sacrificing them to any public outcry that was shriller than usual and diverting to their heads the public wrath for which the Board ought to have borne the full responsibility. This was the general feeling of the office when the Commissioners dismissed poor Mott. It is true that his unhappy fortune in creating scandals did make him a liability to the Commission, and true also that for three successive sessions of Parliament his name had been bandied from one side of the House to the other.⁷ But it is hardly in doubt that his compliance with the wishes of Chadwick and his part in the Bolton report made him stink especially in the nostrils of George Lewis. So that when he involved himself for

¹ Edwin Chadwick to Stephens, 2nd June 1847.

² Tufnell's *Resignation Letter*, 1847.

³ Andover Enquiry: Parker, Qq. 20,377-80.

⁴ *Ibid.*: Q. 24696.

⁵ *Ibid.*: Gulson, Qq. 23,433-46.

⁶ E. Chadwick to E. C. Tufnell, 2nd June 1847; 2nd July 1847.

⁷ 'The Great Mott Case', see above, p. 201

the third time in charges of a 'got-up' report, in the *opera buffa* episode of Keighley Union, known to that generation as the 'Great Mott Case', it is not surprising that Lewis availed himself of the statutory reduction of Assistant Commissioners to call for his resignation. What left a nasty taste in the mouths of the Assistant Commissioners was the way Lewis had taken care to dissociate himself from any part in the report on the Keighley Union—notwithstanding that it was he who had sent Mott private instructions to prepare it!¹

Although it was another four years before the truth was finally dragged from Lewis,² henceforth the office was full of suspicions, rumours, secret warnings, and whisperings. Chadwick thought fit to warn all the Assistant Commissioners to take precautions against their remonstrances being misrepresented by Lewis and Head.³ For their part the Assistant Commissioners began to feel that they were disliked, or that the Commissioners were merely looking for an excuse to dismiss them. There was something smooth about Sir Edmund Head's manner that did not help matters—Tufnell commented on his habit of trying to do things by roundabout means, and on one occasion he had actually written Tufnell a long letter on the importance of anonymous letters—communications which Tufnell himself thought should be thrown straight into the fire.⁴ In such an atmosphere of espionage and delation it did not, for example, seem out of place for George Coode to warn his friend Parker, on the merest hint of possible trouble:

'You will not take it amiss if what I write to you now under a hasty impression should turn out to be wholly without foundation. I know it is likely to be so as, after all, the facts amount to nothing. The fact is, that Lewis has on three occasions within the last week spoken in a tone which is hard to describe but which is disagreeable, and to my ear, implies a slight to yourself. . . . There is a mark or two of pertinacious feeling in his manner which seems to me to mean mischief. . . .

'On looking over this letter I see it is rather too grave and gives a more serious complexion to the matter than is accordant with my own impressions. . . .'⁵

Tufnell himself was another who conceived himself to be a marked man, and indeed, so dissatisfied was he with the way Lewis treated him that

¹ See 'Report of Select Committee on Keighley Union, 1842', and *Hansard* July 1842. Andover evidence of Lewis and Edwin Chadwick, Qq. 18833-38, 20054-63, 21687-93, 22351-79. The Keighley case was reported in *The Times*, 25th November 1846, in *Ferrand v. Queen*.

² I.e. before the Andover Committee.

³ Andover Enquiry: Edwin Chadwick, 28th August, Qq. 19,676 et seq.

⁴ Tufnell's *Resignation Letter*, 1847.

⁵ Andover Enquiry: G. Coode, Qq. 18,875-82.

it took all the pleading of Nicholls himself, not to speak of the strongest urgings from Kay-Shuttleworth, and the promptings of his own very difficult position to prevent him from resigning.¹ Head also treated him with contempt and incurred Tufnell's undying animosity by being the sole person in the whole Commission who, when asked to subscribe to Tufnell's great work, the Normal School at Battersea, 'positively refused to give a farthing'. 'I knew', said Tufnell, 'that they were ready to dismiss me the instant they could find pretext. They considered I was a dangerous character because from the first moment of my appointment I always endeavoured consistently to enforce the provisions of the law and did not turn round the moment Messrs Lewis and Head obtained the guidance of the office. From that moment all the former practice of the Commissioners in enforcing the law was laid aside and they endeavoured to popularize it by yielding to every vulgar clamour.'² How fully these fears were justified the whole Commission had cause to know in 1843, when with flagrant cynicism the Commissioners peremptorily dismissed Assistant Commissioner Day, in such a fashion and at such a time that the whole world could hardly doubt that the Commissioners held him to be responsible for the Rebecca Riots which were at that moment taking place in his district.

Day³ was an Assistant Commissioner of eight years' standing. His record was exemplary. During his whole period of office he had not been more than three months absent from his work. His conduct had never been the subject of complaint, and Lewis himself had to admit that there was not in the office a single scrap of evidence upon which a charge could be founded. In his views on Poor Law administration, Day approximated far more to those of Lewis than of Chadwick. Yet this was the man who was sacrificed, without even the pretence of levelling a formal charge against him, at a time when public opinion was roused against the Poor Law within his district.

The Commissioners adopted the view which the anti-Poor Law journals had seized upon, that the Rebecca Riots were nothing but an expression of anti-Poor Law feeling. That anti-Poor Law feeling did participate in these grotesque disturbances, where men dressed in women's clothes and calling themselves the 'Daughters of Rebecca' burned and hacked in sunder the tollbars of the South Wales countryside and later made the mountain nights lurid with the glare of blazing

¹ (a) Tufnell's *Resignation Letter*, 1847. (b) F. Smith's *Kay-Shuttleworth*, p. 70. He did resign, finally, in 1845.

² Tufnell's *Resignation Letter*, 1847.

³ The 'Day Case'. Andover Enquiry: cf. Andover Committee Report, *Index*, pp. 54-7.

workhouses, admits of no doubt. But the riots were a general social disturbance, not a mere anti-Poor Law riot; and in a remarkable memorandum which he submitted to the Home Secretary, Chadwick was disposed to rank the depression in the iron trade, the wild and untamed spirit of the Welsh miners and the beginnings of Welsh nationalism, as of equal importance with the anti-Poor Law feeling.¹ Brushing these views aside, the Commissioners, while a committee of enquiry was sitting upon the disturbances, arbitrarily demanded Day's resignation.

The Commissioners, when Day protested, made their case even more shameful by cloaking their real reasons behind a variety of paltry excuses. At first they suggested that in August he had been laid up for five weeks, was incapable of getting through his usual work, and they were therefore reluctantly forced to dismiss him. Day could only comply with their request, but a further protest, this time to Graham, elicited the new excuse that the Commissioners had no option, since a reduction of Assistant Commissioners was rendered necessary. Neither excuse was true, and both were subsequently admitted to have had nothing to do with the matter.

In fact, the real reasons for the dismissal were never revealed. Nicholls would say no more than that he thought Day lacked tact; on all other counts he had nothing but praise for the man. Indeed, it is clear that Nicholls's part was secondary to that of the main actor, George Lewis. Lewis's explanations cast a fleeting glimpse at the Rebecca Riots, but got no further than the cryptic remarks that the Commissioners' opinion 'was a fixed opinion as to his general mode of management which no explanation could remove', 'an opinion (which) arose *before* the disturbances', and the even more sinister addition that during the enquiry the Commissioners received very unfavourable opinions on Day and his 'want of temper and tact'—opinions which, Lewis then admitted, *the Commissioners had not bothered to investigate*.

The truth of the matter was probably what Tufnell suggested, that the Commissioners had received an anonymous letter upon which they had acted.² But whether or not the dismissal was meant to divert blame for the riots from the Commissioners themselves to their subordinate, such was Day's own interpretation, such was the general feeling in the office, and such was the general impression the removal made upon the public. It shook the office considerably, and nothing more so than the knowledge that the dismissal had received no discussion at the Board, that no minute had been made upon it, and that throughout,

¹ Edwin Chadwick to J. Graham, 11th July 1843.

² *Resignation Letter*, 1847.

the Commissioners' proceedings were shifty and wrapped in silence. Indeed, from this point of view, the dismissal was of a piece with the general conduct of the office business which had grown more and more arbitrary as Lewis and Head realized the security with which Graham's support buttressed them. It was in vain for Chadwick to protest: the Commissioners' proceedings grew more and more reckless, private letters began to supplant the official and minuted instructions to the Assistant Commissioners, private discussion of business and the personal division of the office routine began to assume over-large proportions, orders were increasingly signed by single Commissioners or away from the office itself. To Chadwick the removal of Day was only a logical development of such arbitrary proceedings: 'Believe me, my dear Day,' he wrote to the unfortunate man, 'you are of your own counsel or you are very badly advised in departing from the issue:

'... The wrong done to you and to the public by your dismissal without reference to specific acts of demerit or statement of them, and without estimate of your services as compared with those of others: the legal offence, the public wrong of acting or assuming to act otherwise than at a Board, as provided by the Statute, or when sitting together face to face as at a Board, acting or presuming to act without proper records taken at the time by the provided recording officer and by so presuming to act, depriving the subject or the public at large of the securities for legal responsibility for any misfeasance, or nonfeasance or malfeasance for this they or any individual of them may be answerable; the writing or receiving any letters on public business without inserting them or their minutes as part of the security for responsibility. . . . However proper their acts may be in themselves their propriety is no exoneration of the offence of the abrogation of the subject's security for justice or of the legislatures's security for responsibility; and the merits or demerits of your acts are irrelevant to the abrogation of the security you are giving to those, who, being shocked at the apparent mode of the removal but nevertheless have the proper inclination to leave to the exercise of authority, conceive that there must be something at the bottom of it justificatory of the facts for the Commissioner's proceedings. . . .¹

In truth, Chadwick's sentiments were scarifying. Since 1840, he stormed, the improvements in the office were arrested, the office business sank to 'ordinary routine', the correspondence, the quality of reports and public documents had degenerated and their sale diminished, and thousands of cases had been unnecessarily admitted to public relief.² When a wave of incendiarism spread a trail of charring hayricks across the Home Counties, it was the Commissioners he blamed for their

¹ Edwin Chadwick to Day, 6th October 1844.

² Edwin Chadwick's *Second Vindicating Letter to Sir G. Grey*, N.D., July 1847.

carelessness in allowing the roundsman system to re-appear.¹ Everywhere he claimed to see the return of the old abuses, and for the failure of the law Chadwick blamed, not its original principles but the 'imperfect and in many respects unsatisfactory manner in which the measures in England and Ireland have been allowed to be carried out',² while to another and more intimate correspondent he made his meaning even more clear by levelling the charge direct at the 'personnel of the Commission'.³ But he could do nothing, and his letters were nothing but querulous complaints.

'The administration of the Poor Law', he would write to one person, 'is, I am sorry to say, running back very extensively. I calculate that we are now paying nearly more than one million of money and giving relief to 400,000 cases more than the distresses of the times will warrant and beyond the standard of well-managed places . . . which have sustained distress as much as the rest and which have given relief so as to elicit no complaint.'⁴ To a second, 'The Poor Law has from various causes been so far paralyzed and driven back that only a very large measure of reconstruction will, I fear, restore it'.⁵ To another he said, 'The Poor Law is being sadly driven back',⁶ and in 1845 he was so aggrieved and embittered as to demand from the always unsympathetic Peel 'an impartial enquiry into the increase of pauperism'.⁷ 'Upwards of a million and a quarter', he wrote to Napier, of the *Edinburgh*, 'I will set down as misspent, chiefly by tenant farmers in the rural districts who still evade the law and give relief in aid of wages, . . . and in towns by owners of tenements occupied by the poorer classes which owners pay their own rents in the shape of relief; shop-keeper Guardians who dispense outdoor relief to be spent at their own shops'.⁸

¹ *Memo on Incendiarism in Home Counties*, 1844 (written, July 1847).

² Edwin Chadwick to M. Napier, 2nd March 1844.

³ Edwin Chadwick to J. Burton, 3rd June 1844.

⁴ E. Chadwick to Capt. Chapman, 1st January 1843.

⁵ E. Chadwick to H. Hutton, 25th December 1843.

⁶ E. Chadwick to J. Longmore, 18th July 1844.

⁷ E. Chadwick to R. Peel, 30th April 1845.

⁸ E. Chadwick to M. Napier, 2nd March 1844.

CHAPTER II

THE ANDOVER SCANDAL BREAKS

I

IT was what Graham called 'a workhouse squabble in the South of England' which started the long train of consequences.

In Andover, the workhouse was being managed by a particularly inhumane master named McDougal. His reputation was such that labourers would accept as little as 5s. or 6s. per week wages rather than enter the House—and this in an area where wages had ruled at 8s. before the New Poor Law. In midsummer of 1845, one of the Guardians investigated the persistent rumours of cruelty. To his horror he found that the paupers were so starved that they fought amongst each other for the rotting bones which they had to crush for manure—bones steeped in the liquor of manure, horse bones, and, said some, bones brought from the neighbouring churchyard!

The Guardian immediately petitioned his M.P., Mr Etwall, and also Wakley and Duncombe, who, as he knew, were the most vocal among the anti-Poor Law group. Graham expressed polite disbelief when Wakley presented the petition but consented to a local enquiry. The Assistant Commissioner sent to conduct it was Henry Parker, he who considered himself as a 'marked man'.

Parker concluded the enquiry: and to Graham's horror, the facts were proved true. Fortunately it was so near the end of the session that he excused himself from presenting the Report. But at that very moment, a new set of charges were made against the workhouse master, this time by the Medical Officer of Andover Union, who accused him of assaulting the female paupers. Parker was sent to open a second enquiry. By now *The Times* had got hold of the story, and sent a special correspondent to report the case. Thenceforward, every day for the next fortnight, Henry Parker was accused of protracting the enquiry, of shielding the accused and of showing every kind of partiality. Sir Edmund Head grew more and more nervous as each day brought a new attack. In the end he lost patience and brusquely interfered with Parker's conduct of the tribunal. He had made two interventions, both equally ill-advised, when the matter was suddenly brought to an end by the resignation of the accused workhouse master.

Parker returned in a very bad temper at what he deemed the unjustifiable slurs on his discretion. Most unhappily for him, however, he had at the Andover Union's request recommended a new workhouse master, named Price. *The Times* suddenly revealed that Price had already been dismissed for misconduct by another Union. George Lewis was furious; he sent for Parker and severely reprimanded him for what he called a 'grave act of indiscretion'. Parker became very angry and stubborn, accused his superiors of interference, and finally left Lewis in a huff, returning to his work in the countryside. After waiting vainly for some sort of apology for a week, George Lewis put it to his colleagues that he had been personally insulted, and prevailed on them to demand Parker's resignation.

The dismissal created a tremendous stir in the Poor Law office. To fire Parker after the ruffianly assaults of *The Times* was to give the impression that its charges had been just. Coode, who was Parker's bosom friend, burst out:

'Although I have seen symptoms enough of a shabby desire to truckle to newspaper clamour at Parker's or anybody else's expense, so that the Commissioners or rather two of them could gain some credit by it, I am still amazed at the result.'¹

Chadwick was cooler, but for that reason the more scarifying. This, he maintained, was a repetition of Day's case. As in that instance, so now, a subordinate's dismissal had been ordered by an informal letter, unminuted; it was both an illegal and an arbitrary proceeding.² Parker's case was only the latest in a series, each worse than the last. Why! he cried, if the Commissioners were indeed dissatisfied with Parker's conduct of the case, they could have noticed his errors at once. 'I think', he said, 'the dismissal of Mr Parker was a hardship and that the personal attacks to which he had been subjected rendered the measure somewhat harder . . . as it did render him liable to those unjust imputations of partiality'.³

II

Now the session came to its end. The Corn Law Crisis engaged all the public's anxieties, and the Andover case seemed to have been but another of the dreary series of Poor Law cases like the Eton scandal and the Hoo case. But Parker was furious at his treatment, and he determined

¹ Andover Enquiry: Q. 18882.

² Ibid.: Chadwick, 19183-98; 19230 et seq.; 19350-97.

³ Ibid.: Chadwick, Q. 19137.

to press the matter further. He wrote a pamphlet attacking the Commissioners. With Chadwick's help he drew up a petition to the House, accusing the Commissioners of having unjustly sacrificed him to cover their own offences and omissions, and humbly praying for a Committee of Enquiry. And in W. D. Christie, the M.P. for Weymouth, he found a parliamentary champion. Christie had little to commend him except a short pamphlet on 'Ballot' and the fact that he had for some months been Lord Minto's private secretary; but he was a man of character: 'of great ability and worth, acute and industrious, endowed with expansive sympathies and genial warmth of heart'.

When Parliament reconvened, and the first rush of confusion over the repeal of the Corn Laws had passed away, leaving the Commons grimly and dully arguing the case for week after weary week, Graham found himself faced with an unpleasant situation. There were no less than three motions before the House. Etwall, the Member for Andover, moved for a public enquiry into the Andover workhouse. Ebrington, at Chadwick's instance, moved as an amendment that this enquiry should cover bone-crushing. Christie, however, moved as his amendment that the House should take Henry Parker's petition into account, and extend the enquiry to the facts of his dismissal. On the 5th March 1846 there was a short sharp debate. Graham was willing to give the House the papers and evidence relating to the Andover enquiries and copies of the Poor Law Board's correspondence with the Andover Union, but he refused a public enquiry. At any other time he would have succeeded; but the Conservative Party was split in two and protectionists were all out to harass and punish their former leaders. On a vote, Christie beat Graham by 92 to 69, and the Committee was accordingly moved.

III

It was June before the Andover Committee prepared to investigate Parker's dismissal. Till then it confined itself to elucidating the occurrences at Andover and making up its mind as to Parker's conduct at that enquiry. But to the general public, stimulated to a high state of curiosity by the revelations of the two other committees of enquiry, all this was a tedious prologue which they impatiently hoped would soon end.

The Committee, half of which had been named by Etwall, was so composed that nobody could guess what conclusions it would reach. Lord Courtenay, its chairman, proved astonishingly impartial. Of its fifteen members, eight were said to be opponents of the New Poor Law,

and the other seven supporters of it. But nobody knew or could know whether the anti-Poor Law members would vote for Parker in order to embarrass the Commissioners, or vote against him because they hated everything connected with the Law. Similarly, the pro-Poor Law party contained such men as Christie and Etwall, who from the start were hostile to Lewis and sympathetic to Parker. But in addition, Christie had introduced a new element to confuse the alignment of sympathies. He had managed to score another victory over the Government by forcing it to allow the Committee to investigate the circumstances in which William Day had been dismissed in 1844. The result of the Committee's deliberations was quite unpredictable.

Naturally, Christie headed the anti-Commissioner group. His secret connexion with Parker and also with Chadwick made him their spokesman leader on the Committee. He plied them with carefully chosen leading questions, and if some awkward query drove them into a corner, was always prompt to rescue them by capping the offending question with another which destroyed its effect. Pechell, whose interest in the matter was that he had remonstrated against bone-crushing as far back as 1842, was from the first inclined to follow Christie's lead, in so far as it was Parker and Chadwick who had opposed bone-crushing and Lewis and Nicholls who had supported it.

On his side, Lewis also had powerful coadjutors at the committee table. His intimate friendship with Graham brought him the support of Stuart Wortley and John Manners-Sutton. Wortley, a lawyer of no particular brilliance was a Peelite who followed his leaders into the wilderness, and whose sole claim to the attention of posterity is that in 1856-7 he became Solicitor-General. Manners-Sutton was perhaps a stronger character, since 1841 Under-Secretary to Graham at the Home Office. Graham he admired greatly,¹ and throughout the enquiry it was he above all who acted as the agent of the Commissioners and of Lewis especially, inside the committee room. As the tension rose from day to day, and new disclosures followed, one hard on the other's heels, the whole Committee polarized itself around Sutton and Christie, who, never too friendly at the start seemed to end up almost like opposing counsel.

Public attention was just ripe for the investigation. The Corn Law debates were over. (Over even in the Lords, where for several days they had dragged dully.) For a brief moment the fall of Peel's Cabinet and the inauguration of Russell's first Ministry caused attention to waver; then as dullness settled effectively over parliamentary affairs, all

¹ *Life and Letters of Sir J. Graham* (ed. Parker), vol. ii, p. 56.

eyes turned again to the Committee, and eagerly awaited the long-expected, and now imminent cross-questioning of the 'Three Kings'. Alas! for such hopes—the scandal was inordinately dull! Nicholls, said one newspaper, could only 'praise everybody, feel for everybody, and sit in his apartment doing what others will let him'.¹ *The Times* gave him an extremely bad press, lecturing him on his 'shortness of memory', his vagueness as to whether he thought the Central Board or the Andover Guardian responsible for the bone-crushing scandal, and, above all, his vague generalities as to why Parker had lost the confidence of the Commissioners.² Sir Edmund Head, the next to be examined, was hardly more illuminating, except that he described fairly circumstantially why he thought Parker should have been dismissed.³ Even Lewis's evidence, more eagerly awaited than that of any other, fell flat upon the Press and the public who had hoped for more stirring things, since he produced little save his own views as to Parker's mismanagement, and a rather embarrassed reply as to why he had changed the mode of minuting in 1841.⁴ So far, the Committee, it seemed, 'sometimes prompting, sometimes extorting submissions contributed to unfold the character of the principal persons. The Commissioners,' continued this journal, 'of course, show only the fair side of their characters; but enough transpires to awaken not a little suspicion.'⁵

So far it was doubtful as to whether it would be possible for Christie to call Chadwick. Chadwick's connexion with the case only began with a message which he had carried from Lewis to Parker, after the latter's resignation. His knowledge of what was going on was drawn entirely from the newspapers, and the only actor connected with the enquiry who had called upon him was William Day.⁶ It was indeed, typical of Chadwick, that in the midst of all this bustle, not knowing whether or not he would be called on to give evidence, he was occupied at one and the same time with a set of Interment Clauses which he was prevailing upon Mackinnon to present for him,⁷ with drawing up memoranda to help James Morrison on the Railway Committee which had just been set up, and also with memoranda and minutes of evidence for the Committee on Private Bills which he had persuaded Hume to have nominated!⁸

But 'suspicions had been awakened', and particularly with relation

¹ *Daily News*, 19th August 1846.

² *Ibid.*, 10th July 1846.

³ *Daily News*, 19th August 1846.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *The Times*, 3rd July, 9th July 1846.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 18th July 1846.

⁷ E. Chadwick to G. Coode, 18th July 1846.

⁸ See below, pp. 295-6.

to Chadwick himself. Head, for example, had made no secret of his contempt for and mistrust of the Secretary, and Lewis's references to the 1841 remonstrance only served to confirm the suspicions. Chadwick set to work. 'You will, I am told,' he wrote off immediately to George Coode, 'be summoned for a long examination in Parker's case. I want to see you in relation to it early. Sir Edmund Head has, it appears, declared that the Board have not consulted me; that they have not confidence in me, and being asked why they did not, since they had the power, dismiss me, he declined to answer. He afterwards explained that he had no confidence in my legal opinion as compared to yours. Let me know when I may expect you.'¹ But not two days afterwards he was scribbling joyfully 'yours in haste' to a letter which jubilated that, 'I am told that you and I are both summoned to attend the Andover Committee on Wednesday morning. I should like to see you on Monday night or on Tuesday morning. . . .'²

No sooner had this summons arrived than the unofficial coterie of Christie, Parker, Chadwick, and Coode awoke to life and hurriedly elaborated a plan of campaign. Parker hastily summoned Chadwick to meet Christie,³ and they concocted between them a set of leading questions. 'I will ask you', runs Christie's memorandum, 'some questions about letters of single Commissioners to Assistant Commissioners, and the absence of protection to the latter if the instructions given should afterwards be repudiated or *not acknowledged*.'

'In answer to which I think you may tell me something about Mott and the Keighley case.

'The Jenkin Jones case seems to me a good illustration in the Commissioners of similar action by a single Commissioner *not by letter*, and I will lead to it that way.'⁴ Having prepared themselves, Coode and Chadwick awaited the summons, Chadwick grimly commenting the while, 'The Commissioners' evidence is understood closed and no damage that I learn is done to Parker or anyone but themselves.'

The Andover case woke up as soon as Coode began to give evidence. The conclusion of his examination brought on a storm. On the whole it seemed that Coode was too frightened to speak his mind freely, that although revealing, his statements were being vastly toned down. 'This character is essentially comic', thought the *Daily News*,⁵ as, at the moment he stepped down, an awkward question drew from him a halting admission that Lewis had in the past made certain observations

¹ E. Chadwick to G. Coode, 15th July 1846.

² Undated—Parker to Edwin Chadwick.

⁵ *Daily News*, 19th August 1846.

³ *Idem.*, 17th July 1846.

⁴ Undated memo. in Christie's hand.

upon Parker's conduct. Coode appeared to decline to compromise himself further, when Christie suddenly produced before him some of the letters he had written to Parker. Coode protested violently against their being read; the Committee was torn between respect for private correspondence and its own curiosity. To Coode's relief it compromised at authorizing the reading of only those parts dealing with Parker's official capacity, but the result was such a garbled and unintelligible farrago of broken phrases that, over-ruling its former decision, it ordered the whole letters to be read: and to a marvelling world were exposed, first, the full text of Coode's letter of 1843 where he warned Parker of Lewis's 'insolent' and 'pertinacious letter', and even worse, the letter he had written when Parker resigned—the boiling hot letter where he accused the Commissioner of 'a shabby desire to truckle to newspaper clamour'.¹

This ridiculous exposure of George Coode's true feelings, and his subsequent preposterous attempts to repudiate the sentiments he had expressed, put Chadwick in a rare good humour. 'I have not seen many persons since your (Coode's) appearance before the Committee', he chuckled, 'but those I have seen are of two classes: the non-official and the official; both laugh very much at your having been in a plight in having had the truth so brought out, but the public laugh most. The official people, however, after a minute and the laugh has passed away, look very grave and say that it is too bad so to use and force out private correspondence.' And then, with a sly dig at Coode, 'Before I gave evidence I was exhorted, apparently from you, not to commit myself by making undue reservations; I was exhorted to speak out'.²

This was precisely Chadwick's intention, to speak out now that, at last, his opportunity had come. Stimulated by Coode's half-revelations, the public awaited Chadwick with some curiosity; and from the day he first gave evidence to the end of the enquiry the excitement mounted every day. Not merely the matter he had to relate but the manner of his bearing seemed to sweep away any shreds of propriety in which the Commissioners still tried to shield themselves from the shrill blast. 'He is passionless,' wrote one observer, 'his language subdued; his tones gentle and dulcet; but he is resolute to unveil mis-management, neglect of duty, favouritism, and oppression. He is armed at all points; he makes no assertion that he is not prepared to prove; uses no argument that is not unassailable; and the effect produced by his four days' endurance of question and cross-question is shattering!'³

¹ *The Times*, 23rd August 1846.

² Edwin Chadwick to G. Coode, 25th July 1846.

³ *Daily News*, 19th July.

Helped by Christie's leading questions, Chadwick made the pace for the Commissioners. His first sentences, expressing an opinion on Parker's dismissal, stated in calm and judicious manner, impressed but did not startle. Then Christie juggled his questions and Chadwick responded: Yes, he replies, when *The Times* began to report the Andover Enquiry, he warned Parker to have a shorthand writer as a protection against misrepresentation; he told him, indeed, to 'mind well what he was about and to guard every step he took'. 'Indeed, and why?' asks Christie, innocently, 'and had there been any display of personal feeling towards Parker which made this warning necessary?' But Mr Chadwick can only reply, gravely, that the Committee must be responsible 'for necessary answers to their own questions'. 'If you wish to decline to answer, the Committee will consider your objections', comes back the suave riposte, and thus pressed, Chadwick can hardly help explaining to the Committee that he had had to warn Parker on two occasions of the consequences of presenting the Commissioners with certain reports, to say that 'they would not be well received and would excite displeasure'. Raised eyebrows at the Committee table; 'and', continues Christie's naïf questioning, 'had any instances of such displeasure actually occurred?' 'Why, yes', Chadwick can only reply, 'he himself had suffered for a report he had drawn up on the state of the Bolton Union'. There is confusion for a while, the Committee all at sixes and sevens; the room is cleared. When the public floods back, Mr Chadwick is asked to say whether definitely 'Assistant Commissioners have not improved their position by representing strongly abuses and violations of the Law in their districts?' A gasp of amazement goes up as Chadwick replies, 'Yes', and coolly names off-hand three Assistant Commissioners who have so suffered!¹

Everybody was agog to know what was coming next. Chadwick's air of assurance carried so much conviction, his intrepidity had torn such a large hole in the Commissioners' protestations of innocence that people could hardly believe he was not telling the truth. Yet, the leader of public opinion in this matter, *The Times*, suspended judgement and for the moment uttered no sign.²

But by the evening of Chadwick's second day of evidence it had quite made up its mind. It had been a day even more startling than the first; a day that heard Chadwick's detailed and destructive criticism of the mode of transacting office business and the setting aside of his remonstrance; a day when it was revealed for the first time that he

¹ See *The Times*, 27th July.

² Ibid.

had made no less than three formal protests before that date, all of which had been upheld by the Home Secretary, against the Commissioners; where it appeared that in 1837 the Commissioners had issued an order, which, after Chadwick's protest, the Home Secretary himself had admitted was illegal!

'If it could be imagined', pontificated *The Times*, 'that Messrs Parker and George Coode spoke under the irritation caused by what they may have considered ill-usage, there is no ground for receiving with the slightest reserve the still stronger sentiments of Mr Chadwick against the Commissioners. That gentleman has answered the questions of the Committee with an air of frankness which proves that he has fairly and fearlessly, though perhaps a little reluctantly, spoken the truth with reference to the tyranny, the irregularity and numerous other malpractices of the Somerset House triumvirate. If there were no other evidence against them than that of Mr Chadwick there would be quite enough to doom them to disgrace and entitle them to summary punishment. . . .'¹

So far, for these first two days, Chadwick had felt the full benefit of Christie's aid. But now he was to be cross-questioned. When on the third day of his evidence Wakley was the chief examiner, it might have been expected that Chadwick would lose ground, for Wakley had a long and acrimonious history of struggle with the Poor Law. Yet, although nothing startling occurred, Chadwick gave him back as good as he got, and when the session terminated it seemed that both men walked out of the room with far more respect for one another than they had ever previously entertained.² But the next day provided fireworks. . . .

Never yet had the Committee and its crowded audience known such an exciting day. As it was Chadwick's last day of evidence, the questions ranged hither and thither over all he had previously said—further evidence on the dissatisfaction among the Assistant Commissioners, the important fact that Chadwick had protested when they were reduced to nine, more explanations of his views on dietaries and the workhouse test: such was the nature of the evidence that day. To every question Chadwick returned a perfectly ready and straightforward answer.

Such mastery as he had shown over the Committee threw the Grahamites into confusion. So far they had completely failed to shake Chadwick's testimony, or extract from him any damaging admission; but as the question veered by degrees from workhouse test to dietaries, Stuart Wortley prepared to entrap him at last. It was Cobbett who had first started the cry that the Poor Law Commissioners had been instructed

¹ *The Times*, 29th July 1846; 30th July 1846.

² Ibid., 30th July.

to coarsen the food of the poor; he claimed to have seen the very document in which this policy was recommended. After him Ferrand and John Walter had both been wont to refer to this 'dark document' as they called it. Challenged to produce it by Walter, in 1843, Graham had denied anything but a glimmering recollection of it. It was common knowledge that Chadwick had had a hand in preparing this document (*Notes of the heads of a Bill*); and now, Stuart Wortley slyly interposed the question whether Chadwick had not recommended coarser food in a document submitted to the Government. He certainly did not expect the answer which he received. Chadwick unhesitatingly admitted the existence of the document, offered to produce it, explained that although he had drafted it, he had done so as a draft for the consideration of the Board of Enquiry, and then thundered:

"The gradual change proposed was intended to be a change in the food of the able-bodied pauper, but any statement or representation that by 'the poor' was meant the labouring population, that it was intended to reduce them to the use of coarser food—every such innuendo was then *and is now*, a false and libellous innuendo." [Sensation.]

'Chairman: "I must remind you, Mr Chadwick, that your answer appears to cast an imputation on this Committee who are responsible for the questions put to you, and I therefore beg you will withdraw your last expression."

'A pause of some minutes elapsed during which Mr Chadwick appeared determined to stand by his answer, but after a little deliberation, Mr S. Wortley, disclaimed having put the question to Mr Chadwick in any opprobrious sense.'

The tension relaxed, a hubbub ensued, and as it died down amid mutual apologies, the words 'and is now' were expunged from the minutes.

However, this proved only a lull in the excitement; it had hardly subsided when Christie's persuasive voice was once again heard enquiring whether 'Chadwick had ever had occasion to complain of misrepresentation in regard to his opinions and intentions in the administration of the law'. Granted at last the long-awaited, eagerly anticipated opportunity of saying what for the last four years had always constituted his rancorous obsession, Chadwick did not hesitate. Plunging boldly he answered 'Very frequently', and then produced a circumstantial account of the dispute about the letter-writing. 'On one occasion Sir James Graham (murmurs) . . . said that the letters were not those of the Commissioners, but the letters of the Secretary, who he must say, had made the law unpopular by writing harshly. Now it so happens,' concluded Chadwick, 'that that letter . . . was not written by me, but by one of

the Commissioners——' A gasp of surprise went up, as Christie leaned forward and rapped out his next question:

'Mr Christie: "By which one of them was it written?"

'Mr Chadwick: "By Mr. G. Lewis [Sensation]. . . ."'

For minutes afterwards everything was an indescribable confusion until amid the tumult it was announced that the records would be expunged so that none of the names mentioned would appear; there came the usual welter of apologies and explanations. Then Chadwick was heard making a little speech, which was in fact a tactical stroke of extreme brilliance; it was a brief but beautifully phrased panegyric upon none other than old John Walter of *The Times*, explaining why he had been misled about the 'document' and 'coarse food'; and then expressing an appreciation, as tactful as it was sincere, of the man who for twelve years had never ceased to harry him—his respect for 'his great labour, for the large sacrifices of money he has made (as well of time)—much larger than any public man of whom I am aware . . . to maintain what he believes to be of great importance to the working classes, however mistaken on any point I may have thought him'.¹

The effect upon *The Times* was prodigious. It was not merely that Chadwick had publicly praised Walter; the point was that Chadwick had proved Walter's long insistence on the 'dark document' correct and had unimpeachably branded Graham as a public perjurer. 'At the most unexpected time and from the most improbable quarter' it burst out, 'we find ourselves and our cause justified and the statements we have often repeated to incredulous ears thoroughly established.' Henceforth it publicly threw its mantle over its years-old enemy; nothing was too good for him. In a leader obviously written under Walter's personal direction, and as obviously intended as his personal reply to Chadwick's declaration, the newspaper laboured for a *whole column* to establish the fact that Walter had never held Chadwick *personally* responsible for the document, and in fact (another laboured argument) that he was *not* individually responsible for it; and as for his questioners, it had nothing but derision for those who had 'possibly in all simplicity' (videlicet, 'maliciously'!) put him questions 'calculated to convict him of a great imposition and to concentrate against him a great weight of odium'.²

Such was the blaze of glory in which Chadwick concluded his evidence that all Lewis's attempts at rebuttal were ignored. He gave his own version of the remonstrance on office business in 1841; he tried to explain Chadwick's successful action in 1840; he tried to show that

¹ *The Times*, 1st August 1846.

² *Ibid.*

Chadwick had pressed the publication of the Bolton report in 1841 merely in order to make mischief; he cast doubts on Chadwick's judgement, and as much as he dared, against his integrity. But nobody seemed to listen and *The Times* hit off prevailing sentiment by suggesting:

'The Secretary himself is the present victim. We have not space for more than a cursory notice of the proceedings before yesterday's Committee; but they exhibit a Commissioner, in conjunction with his friends on the Committee, labouring with great industry to offer his own secretary, right-hand man, and most familiar official, in order to propitiate the public indignation. This proceeding is one which cannot be often repeated and has now been repeated too often. It is too late to throw over Mr Chadwick. He is thoroughly identified with the Poor Law Commission, both that antecedent to the law and that which carried it into execution. If he is to be given up, the law is also.'¹

But the greatest mistake which Lewis made was to call his old father into the committee room to give evidence on the behaviour of Chadwick at the office before George Lewis had entered it. The result was to cover T. F. Lewis in ridicule and the Secretary in glory. Always rather a figure of fun, in his old age, Thomas Lewis was more pompous, more verbose and more Pecksniffian than ever—the authentic slippered pantaloon. 'The Eidolon of a departed Commissioner revisits the glimpses of the moon,' wrote the *News*—'Since the ghost of Gaffer Thumb appeared to King Arthur, so comical a figure has not trod the stage.'²

Lewis certainly provided the last days of the enquiry with all the entertainment it wished.³ He described his attitude to Chadwick in 1834—how he manœuvred Chadwick out of attending Board Meetings—how Chadwick had unscrupulously thwarted his wishes in the preparation of the Consolidated Order and the Burial Order. But Lewis's memory was not what it was and the first sensation of the day was provided when he denied that Chadwick had ever stopped the Commissioner from issuing an illegal order:

"I know of no order disallowed but I dare say the thing has some foundation. I have not consulted Mr Lefevre on this or any other point, having come here to tell a plain, unvarnished tale; still, however, I do not retain a glimmer of a recollection on this matter. . . ."

'Mr Chadwick was here called and said, "If the Committee will allow me to refer to the representations made at the time, I will to-morrow if it wishes, produce a document written on the subject, placed in the hands of each Commissioner, Mr F. Lewis among the number and subsequently forwarded to the

¹ *The Times*, 5th August 1846.

² See *The Times*, 6th and 11th August 1846.

³ *Daily News*, 19th August 1846.

Government. The order was not one issued but one proposed and it contemplated making the number of families a ground for allowance."

'Sir F. Lewis, whose looks expressed a theatrical amount of astonishment, which caused very considerable tittering among the members of the Committee and the spectators present asked, "Did you see the order in writing?"

'Mr Chadwick: "I believe it was under discussion and deliberation."

'Sir F. Lewis: "Did it go before the Secretary of State?"

'Mr Chadwick: "Yes, the proposal to issue the order was sent to him [Sensation]. . . ."¹

Worried and harrassed by Christie's merciless cross-questioning, conscious, perhaps, that he was making himself a trifle ridiculous, Lewis at last burst out with an answer that left no doubt in the minds of the spectators as to why he was so anxious to rake up the past. Pressed by Christie to say what opinion he held of Chadwick he finally ejaculated, 'Well, then, since I am pressed for an answer, I tell you honestly that he is an able man. But I thought him the most unscrupulous, the most dangerous and as little trustworthy as any officer I ever saw within the walls of any office. Now can I say more? (Great sensation) . . .'

He had, indeed, said too much. Even his apology to Chadwick and his explanation that he had used 'unscrupulous' only in so far as it related to the conduct of official business (i.e. in a Pickwickian sense), could not wipe out the terrible effect of his explosion. *The Times* was un pitying and contemptuous; it exploded Lewis's arguments and left Chadwick with greater prestige than ever:

'The Board', wrote *The Times*,² 'is only under too great obligations to (Edwin Chadwick's) industry, talent and experience. For twelve long years it has made every use of Mr Chadwick. For twelve years it has claimed all the credit of what it has considered the successful operation of the law. At length comes the day of account and MR CHADWICK is thrown over. SIR FRANKLAND LEWIS the hero of the system sets to work with all his might to cut the connexion which has raised him to fame. It has given him hereditary office and honour and now he kicks down the ladder by which he ascended.

'SIR FRANKLAND LEWIS is a very great man, a retired Commissioner, the father of a Commissioner, the most conspicuous figure in a great social revolution. MR CHADWICK is his secretary whom he and his two colleagues had the power to dismiss and whom in fact he did banish from the Board or only allow to be present on sufferance. Yet hear how he talks—did ever giant speak with so puling a voice?

"We were so driven up in a corner, in respect to the Consolidated Order, having pledged ourselves to its being issued six days previously, that we had no alternative but to adopt that to which Mr Chadwick had committed us. . . ."

'SIR FRANKLAND immediately after admits that the Commissioners gave

¹ *The Times*, 12th August 1846.

² *Ibid.*

verbal instructions for the Order, committing nothing but the task of composition to MR CHADWICK. But, in fact, this "Order" was according to law and in the spirit of the law. . . . Everybody knew it was the law. When SIR FRANKLAND undertook to carry out the law his eyes were open to the task before him. Nay, to this day he does not venture to disapprove of this famous "Consolidated Order". He only pleads that he was cajoled into carrying out the law he had undertaken to carry out. "I regret that I sanctioned the Consolidated Order but I was constrained to do so by the circumstances of the case." MR CHADWICK, he says, fixed to them a day, got over HEAD and NICHOLLS and so circumvented F. LEWIS. What are the Commissioners made for, if they are to be twisted about in this style by their own Secretary? They can be very great men when the occasion requires but in this instance it seems, one footpad surrounded and plundered three bold dragoons. What makes SIR FRANKLAND'S story of his unhappy seduction still lamer is the admission that he had himself originated the plan of separate operations by which the designing Secretary was able to conquer the Board in detail; and that this plan which worked so well for the Secretary had been devised for the express purpose of ousting that officer from the deliberations of the Board. On SIR FRANKLAND'S own showing it was diamond cut diamond.

'Again, SIR F. LEWIS is questioned touching his consent to the well-known instructional letter to churchwardens, the purport of which was that paupers were to be buried as much like dogs as the service of the Church will allow. We quote his evidence:

'Sir F. Lewis: "My objection was to the horribly offensive regulation that the poor pauper was not to have the bell tolled at his funeral. I was not aware that Mr Coode had been consulted on the subject. But I think Mr Chadwick deliberately and intentionally withheld these regulations from me and had them submitted in my absence."

'Mr Christie: "But your colleagues stole a march on you as much as Mr Chadwick, and why such hard words applied to him?"

'Sir F. Lewis: ". . . They said they saw no harm in approving the regulations. They were not rescinded but the word 'excessive' was introduced in connexion with 'tolling'."

'By this time it seems to have dawned on SIR FRANKLAND that while he was putting it all off on MR CHADWICK, he was not cutting a very dignified figure himself; in fact that he was gratuitously parading himself as a dupe and something else. This rather disturbed the equilibrium of his temper and had the singular effect of quickening his resentment against the alleged author of his suffering—'

And here *The Times* quoted at length Lewis's remark about Chadwick being 'unscrupulous'.

'Of course', continued the leader, 'it is obvious to ask, as Mr Christie did, why the Commissioners did not dismiss so dangerous a man; why did SIR F. LEWIS at all events go on for so many years in close contact with recklessness and peril? He thought, it seems that he could neutralize the danger.

But we shall venture to ask another question. If MR CHADWICK is really to be held responsible for all the deeds of the Commission, why has he not received the honours? Why have we not SIR EDWIN CHADWICK, Bart.? This is not a fair division of the proceeds. If the Secretary has the kicks, pray let him have the half-pence. SIR FRANKLAND seems to think that the use of a Secretary is to come when he is called for, speak when he is spoken to, and take the responsibility. He reminds one of the bloody heroine in the Greek drama, who after perpetrating a horrible murder in the hearing of the Chorus comes out and gravely informs them that it is not she who has done the deed but the family demon, acting by her hands. MR CHADWICK, it seems, is the domestic fiend of Somerset House ready to do all the hard work of the office and yet called names for his compliance. After such an outbreak, really MR CHADWICK should be allowed to tell his own story. . . .'

In the next few days Chadwick's ascendancy was confirmed. Gulson, to the amazement of the spectators (the reports punctuated their copy with 'Sensation' and 'Great Sensation'), nonplussed Head by proving his remissness as Assistant Commissioner from the original accounts of Head's Unions. Day's case came before the Committee, and the Commissioners had even less to say for themselves than in Parker's case. Above all, by producing in the committee chamber T. F. Lewis's own minute of the 1837 Order, written in his very own handwriting, Chadwick scored his most theatrical success, the whole room standing up with excitement, Lewis throwing up his hands in astonishment and exclaiming, 'Why, this is my hand-writing', while to those around him he was heard to mutter that Chadwick's action was a 'piece of high treason'.¹ The *Daily News* was delighted at this grotesque conclusion to the enquiry: 'For four successive days', it commented, 'the Chorus (the Committee) are withdrawn from view. Their seat of judgement is inaccessible to the uninitiated, but depressing rumours creep abroad of acrimonious disputes and quarrels among them. The effect is not unlike, though infinitely more sombre and awe-inspiring than, the disappearance of *Œdipus* in the grove of the Furies. When the action recommences it is full of bustle and incident. Chadwick stands alone, dark and terrible as Milton's hero; confronting the whole three Commissioners who are waxing more and more vehement. The ghost of Sir F. Lewis gambols about more funnily than ever. Mr Day, like another Banquo, shakes his gory locks at his dismissers and Mr Gulson, as a sturdy, honest, rather insubordinate Assistant Commissioner, speaks his mind rather more freely than is agreeable of the doings of his superiors. . . .'²

¹ For all above: *The Times*, 12th to 16th August.

² *Daily News*, 19th August 1846.

The enquiry had been so packed with incident that certainly nobody believed that the drama could soar higher. But as the excitement had risen, tempers on the committee table had risen also. Wortley and Manners-Sutton were quite laid low by their ill-success, and their tone towards Christie became more and more tart. For his part, Christie, enjoying himself to the top of his bent, and feeling rather like a circus master showing off his performing troupe of horses, fobbed off their unwelcome queries.¹ He would say, for example, that he had never met Chadwick till long after the Andover Enquiry began, that his suspiciously extensive knowledge of his papers was derived entirely from Day and Parker who, like other Assistant Commissioners, had had copies made at the time, and that although he admitted to one conversation with him before he gave evidence, he had learned nothing new from it. Such an attitude only made Sutton and Wortley the more incensed.

On the last day of the enquiry,² they were being lashed by Christie particularly badly, and Gulson brilliantly proved his charges against Sir E. Head (Great Sensation). Just then Chadwick came into the room to explain that he had refrained from answering several charges because he had no wish to protract the labours of the Committee; and finally Parker followed to answer one or two unimportant questions. Everybody began to fidget and look about for their things, anticipating that the enquiry would terminate at any moment, when all of a sudden, with nobody knowing quite how, the whole court was in a wild pandemonium, and excitement rose to screaming point. A few moments ago, and the suggestion that anybody was about to fight a duel over Chadwick would have seemed the ravings of a maniac. But just as Parker was about to sit down Christie rose to ask one last question. 'Are the Commissioners,' he said, 'in the habit of exercising control over their secretaries, assistant secretaries, and clerks on the subject of giving evidence with respect to what goes on in the Poor Law office?'

Only the full flavour of Victorian journalese can convey³ what happened:

'Mr Sutton here rose and with great excitement of manner, said, "I must have the room cleared if that question is put."

'The room was cleared accordingly, and for a considerable time the Committee remained in consultation with closed doors. During the interval Mr M. Sutton rushed out of the room apparently in a very agitated state and soon

¹ W. D. Christie to Edwin Chadwick, 20th September 1846.

² For all that follows: *The Times*, 18th August 1846.

³ *The Times*, 18th August 1846.

afterwards Mr S. Wortley followed as if in search of him. On the return of these parties some minor points of the evidence were disposed of after which the Committee adjourned. But no sooner did this take place than rumours began to spread that the abrupt departure of Mr M. Sutton was not without its reason, and that the lengthened enquiry before the Andover Committee was about to terminate in a hostile message from Mr M. Sutton to Mr Christie. It is said, and on undoubted authority, that the dispute arose in the following manner—Mr M. Sutton, when the room was cleared, charged Mr Christie with having put the questions upon which strangers have just been ordered to withdraw, merely because he knew that *The Times* reporter was present. Mr Christie replied that he treated the insinuation with contempt, and thereupon Mr M. Sutton gave an intimation to Mr Christie which left upon the minds of the Committee no doubt that he contemplated sending a hostile message to the Hon. Member for Weymouth. The Committee we understand discussed the propriety of communicating with the Speaker, but we are not aware that they arrived at any decision upon the subject. Finding how matters stood Mr Parker proceeded at once to Westminster Police Court, and there to the no small astonishment of the worthy magistrate who seemed at first to have some difficulty in grasping the full importance of the formidable application made to him, demanded a warrant against the Hon. John Henry Thomas Manners Sutton for contemplating a breach of the peace by sending a challenge to Mr William Dougal Christie, M.P. with a view to fighting a duel. The warrant having been duly made out, a policeman of great size and apparent strength was commissioned to inform Mr M. Sutton that his attendance was required at the Westminster Police Court; and so ends the last chapter in the history of the Andover Enquiry.'

CHAPTER III MANŒUVRES

THE Andover Committee, in its report, found against the Commissioners on all the salient issues. Tacitly, it approved Chadwick's stand; it endorsed his charge that the Assistant Commissioners had been discouraged from reporting abuses, it upheld his suggestion that the Commissioners' object in dismissing Parker and Day had been to make scapegoats of these unhappy subordinates. And, although it declined to endorse Chadwick's charge that there were not enough Assistant Commissioners and that the Commissioners had conducted the office business illegally, it gave the impression that it believed these charges by referring the matter to the House, on the jejune plea that such matters were outside their terms of reference. Furthermore, if it was reluctant to affirm the general, in the particulars they upheld Chadwick's contentions to the very letter; it demanded that in cases of dismissal the minute of and the reasons for and the letters embodying the decision should all be recorded, that the letter should be official and not 'private', and that all such pseudo-private letters as the Commissioners were wont to write on official business were unquestionably irregular. And above all, it agreed that throughout the Parker and Day 'cases', the behaviour of the Commissioners had been nothing less than 'irregular and arbitrary, not in accordance with the statute under which they exercise their function, and such as to shake public confidence in their administration of the law'.¹ A more sweeping condemnation could hardly have been anticipated. There was some truth in Wortley's appeal to the Committee, that if such resolutions were passed, it would be impossible for any man of honour to retain his position for an instant.² Such was generally the accepted opinion. And the more abuse that was heaped upon the Commissioners, the greater the glory reflected upon Chadwick, their antagonist. By their own admission, Lewis and Head admitted him to have been their consistent and unflinching critic; now that Lewis and Head were condemned, it was naturally assumed that Chadwick had been in the right from the very beginning.

¹ Report of the Andover Committee (Select Committee of the House of Commons on the Andover Union, Parliamentary Papers, 1846, v), p. x, par. 15.

² Edwin Chadwick to Liverpool, 24th August 1846.

'However high you stood in public opinion before this you now stand in your proper position in the eyes of all men,'¹ wrote one of his many congratulatory correspondents. Chadwick, the writer continued, had been able in this enquiry, to bring forward 'not only the proofs of his consummate ability', but 'that independence of spoils and splendid moral courage which' every word of his evidence exhibited.² While similar messages of approval poured in at every post, the Press vied with the letter-box. Chadwick alone, proclaimed the *Spectator*, had kept the Commissioners in 'something like bounds'. Against those who painted him as 'an officious, intrusive busybody, a sneaking fellow always trying to undermine their authority', it was the opinion of one journal that the 'circumspect and precise Chadwick certainly has the best of it'.³ The *Times* made 'half the world cry out lustily that the Commissioners' (and in fact 'the whole personnel of the office') must be changed, must be 'turned adrift'.⁴ Wakley (in the Commons) accused the Commissioners of 'retaining office with a desperate tenacity, braving public opinion and bidding defiance to the decisions of a Committee of the House', all of which was perfectly true; and even the *Illustrated London News* joined in the clamour laying it down as an *ipse dixit*, that 'The Poor Law Commissioners, abandoned by all Parties, hold their offices in suspense and disgrace till the sentence passed on them by universal acclamation is executed'.⁵

But from now, Chadwick's strong position was sapped away. He expected George Lewis to resign: and of course Lewis did no such thing. Sir George Grey, the new Home Secretary, told the Commons that nothing more could be done until the next session when the Poor Law Renewal Bill came up: but he also made it clear that the Andover Committee had not heard the full story, and even promised a further enquiry.

In the recess his affairs worsened. A huge pamphlet appeared on the bookstalls entitled *A Digest of the Andover Evidence* by A Barrister. The digest was a travesty, and the preface to it a downright political tract. 'Discontented secretary attempts to counterwork his official superiors', it said. 'An ambitious conceited or wrongheaded subordinate tries to gain his own objects.' Rumours, more insistent as the session approached, made it appear that the Cabinet would support the Commissioners. Overcome by the

¹ Sir Charles Shaw to Edwin Chadwick, 4th September 1846.

² Ibid.

³ The *Spectator* of 24th August 1846; quoted in *The Times* of that date.

⁴ The *Times*, 22nd August 1846.

⁵ The *Illustrated London News*, 7th November 1846.

worry Chadwick became seriously ill, on the very eve of the opening of Parliament :

'I have only just had a subsidence of the inflammation in my ears to have it in my teeth', ran a letter on the eve of the opening of Parliament, 'one on each side, playing up at intervals so that I am not in a condition to work myself, and have very little help now that there is great need. The letter you received accords with my previous impression of a determination to maintain the wrong-doers till the last. The only hope is in appeals to the public or the House of Commons which, having done so much, will yet, there being manifest justice to back them, do more. The Barrister's *Digest* will fully justify me in writing, if I can get power to do so, but I am perplexed at the aspect of the magnitude of my case and the weakness of any physical working ability just now.'¹

His position was even weaker than he realized. For the forces aligned against him were quite other than he naïvely supposed. The matter was simple enough. Let public, let Press, let Parliament blow wind and crack its cheeks, the Cabinet was now a Whig Cabinet, Lewis was a well-liked blood-relation of its most important members, and (as Chadwick might have recollected from the fate of James Stephen and Rowland Hill), it was still unthinkable for blue blood to suffer public disgrace to deck the triumph of a penniless and subordinate civil servant. With the Peelites refusing to join it, on the one hand, and the Whig connexion excluding that 'low man' Cobden, on the other, this Whig Cabinet of 1846 was more aristocratic than any that had come before it. Perhaps Howick (at the Colonies), or Hobhouse (at the Board of Control) were inclined to sympathize with Chadwick ; but the Premier, Lord John Russell, was Lewis's brother-in-law ; Minto, the Lord Privy Seal, was Lord John's father-in-law ; Clarendon, whose sister was Lewis's wife, was at the Board of Trade ; and at the Admiralty was Auckland, closely related to Clarendon ! This formidable nexus was even more dangerous in so far as it was Clarendon, Russell, and Lansdowne who controlled the Party machine, and the last-named also was at this time a most active partisan of Lewis.

The quarrel between Chadwick and Lewis had indeed gone far beyond any hope of compromise. Nothing short of a public trial of strength would satisfy either. Fortified by the official approval of the Andover Committee and justifiably self-righteous, Chadwick determined to take his stand upon the public vindication he had received at their hands. The strain of the last months, however, was taking its toll of him despite his massive frame and remarkable powers of concentration. Compared with Lewis, he had few friends and little influence and his

¹E. Chadwick to Wm. Day, 9th January 1847

recent illness was only a symptom of the nervous excitement which screwed him up to cracking-point. For, if in spite of all that had been done and said, Lewis was upheld against him, it did not only mean to him the end of his livelihood and public disgrace, but far more. His whole life, private and public, was bounded by the circumference of Somerset House. Disgrace to him was tantamount to saying that all his selfless and tremendous labours in the last sixteen years had been a mere beating of the air, that for sixteen years his life had had no purpose. As the hour of final trial drew near he was seized with extreme nervousness, by indignation, by rebellion, but sometimes by a black despair.

His suspicion of Lewis was well founded. That Chadwick had been publicly vindicated, that the Press supported him, only added fuel to Lewis's sulky anger. That he himself should resign he refused even to consider ; but even his friends could not get the Cabinet to dismiss Chadwick.¹ Everybody knew, and the Villiers family more clearly than most, that this would mean a second public enquiry, not on the Andover Union but on Somerset House itself.² Lewis sat sullenly in the office and brooded darkly over his position—'exposed,' he commented savagely, 'to all the insults of the refuse of the House of Commons without the power of defending oneself, and to have one's chief opponent as the Secretary of the Board of which one is a member without the power of dismissing him'.³ Nothing would content Lewis but a public reversal of the Andover Committee's resolutions—he wanted in fact what Chadwick (with far more justice) also demanded—to keep his post and see his adversary ignominiously dismissed. Not that Lewis was enamoured of Poor Laws and his ungrateful task ; *The Fables of Babrius* was more his fancy ;⁴ but his pride was at stake and he was quite willing to refuse the post of Poor Law Commissioner, provided that—and this was the crux—that Russell went through the gestures of publicly asking him to remain.⁵

Russell was perfectly agreeable to giving his brother-in-law the 'first refusal'. Even had he not been so, there was always Clarendon to stiffen him. The Villiers family was indescribably vindictive. Charles Villiers and his sister Theresa hotly charged, with Clarendon himself, the view that the Andover Committee had been packed,⁶ and that its

¹ *Letters of the Rt. Hon. G. C. Lewis*, p. 150.

² See C. Villier's speech in *Hansard*, 21st May 1847 (Second Reading of Poor Law Bill).

³ *Letters of the Rt. Hon. G. C. Lewis*, p. 151.

⁴ Lewis was taken in by this hoax : it had been claimed that these fables were the originals of *Æsop*, and just discovered. Lewis translated them with a preface. 'A disgrace to English scholarship', was one comment on his error.

⁵ C. G. Greville (*Strachey-Fulford* edn.), vol. v, p. 458 (28th June 1847).

⁶ C. Villiers, *Hansard*, 21st May, loc. cit.

witnesses were terrorized into their frequent condemnation of the spotless George Lewis by public opinion. They surged with aristocratic indignation against the man whom they classically described as the *anguis in herba*,¹ this vulgar plebeian Chadwick, who had hatched out privy conspiracy inside the Commission, had organized rebellion against the Commissioners and had used every mean device and dubious connexion with the newspaper world to win over public opinion.² Even Clarendon's lifelong friend Greville was amazed and shocked at their rancour and blind partisanship;³ and feeling the way they did, it was hardly surprising that the session had hardly begun before Russell and Clarendon had gained a majority in the Cabinet.

Not to suspect was impossible; but to know was not the less so. Chadwick faltered. He could not afford to press the Cabinet into any unnecessary conflict. It might mean his career and his livelihood. Furthermore, the Government was that very session about to set up the long-awaited Public Health Board, and Chadwick believed that, even if forced to quit the Poor Law office, he might at least manage to be transferred to this new department.⁴ But while necessity urged him to caution, resentment and anxiety impelled him to action. He was violently worked up. He told himself the Government had cajoled him into acting as Secretary to the Commission only by virtue of a lying promise which it had never fulfilled, that he was being made a scapegoat for all the courses he had condemned, that he was 'being hunted down and passed over in disgrace after having worked so hard for so great a measure'.⁵ And when these thoughts were uppermost in his mind, he made it clear that he would defend himself as publicly as he was attacked.

Yet, every time he threatened to expose the Commissioners, and to write his pamphlet, messages, hints, undertakings flowed from a dozen well-informed sources to lull him into complaisance. One Cabinet Minister told him that the Commissioners would definitely not be retained. Chadwick persisted that he would write his pamphlet. A second Cabinet Minister wrote to say that two other Ministers had assured him to the same effect and he begged him to forbear. Finally Sir George Grey himself told him that the Poor Law Renewal Bill would come late in the session, as it was to await the Report of the Select Committee on Settlements. This seemed to afford him ample

¹ C. Villiers, *Hansard*, 21st May, loc. cit.

² Villier's speech, loc. cit. Also Lord J. Russell, *Hansard*, 21st May, loc. cit.

³ *Greville Journals*, loc. cit.

⁴ See below, pp. 293-6.

⁵ Undated memo. of 1847 on the matter; one of many such.

time to change his mind; so at last he put the pamphlet aside, and lapsed into watchful silence.

Suddenly it was too late. The Poor Law Bill was brought forward, to come on in one week's time, and the Government's intention was perfectly clear. The Commission as an organization independent of Parliament was to end. The Commissioners and their staff would all be dismissed. A new authority would be set up, viz. a Board of four Ministers plus a Parliamentary Secretary who would in fact be the 'head' of the Board. Henceforth, said Grey, the Commissioners could meet their accusers face to face in Parliament. But when Hume and Ferrand demanded that none of the existing Commissioners should be reappointed to the new Board, neither Grey nor Russell would give any such pledge. In short, when the Bill passed, both Lewis and Chadwick would be dismissed; but Lewis *might* be immediately reappointed.

Despite the Cabinet's wish to carry the second reading by storm the impetus of Chadwick's friends carried all before it for the first two days of the debate; the Government could make no headway. It seemed as though Chadwick might, after all, triumph. But then on the third and fourth days the Villiers faction launched their counter-strokes, and it must be said, that what they lost in accuracy they more than made up in virulence. It was bad enough in all conscience when the Prime Minister himself could rise and say of Chadwick that he had 'undermined his superiors', that it was '*completely proved* that there was in the Commission such a division—such a jealousy of the Commissioners—such a wish to set up the Assistant Commissioners against those whom they were serving—that it was impossible that there should not arise causes of differences of opinion between the Commissioners and the Assistant Commissioners'.¹ Chadwick was bewildered and overwhelmed; this was not fighting fair. He had actually sent a note to Russell just before the debate, reminding the Premier that the Law Officers had approved Chadwick's strictures, and that in 1837 and 1840 Russell himself had upheld him against the Commissioners.² 'The family partialities of the noble reformer', he commented bitterly, 'must indeed have blinded him, when he could not distinguish fidelity to the law—to truth—and the public, at the expense of certain ill-will on the part of persons in his position—from the fidelity of accomplices in the violation of the law.'³

¹ *Hansard*, Parliamentary Debates, 20th May 1847, cols. 1144-55.

² Edwin Chadwick to Sir G. Grey, 20th May 1847.

³ Reply to Lord J. Russell's speech in Parliament. MS. Memo. by Edwin Chadwick (N.D.).

But surely the most unscrupulous of all the attacks came from Charles Villiers, in a speech which his anger would hardly let him articulate. 'The Crown lawyers', he had the downright impudence to assert, 'had given their sanction to everything the Commissioners had done. Mr Disraeli had asked,' he went on, 'how was it that the man who was denounced as a dangerous and unscrupulous subordinate was not dismissed? Why,' exploded the furious Villiers, 'how soon would there have been an enquiry on the subject of his dismissal—another Andover Committee, or [in a choked sneer] what would be *the same thing*—a Somerset House Committee. The House,' he went on—his anger had brought him nigh to tears—'had already virtually deprived the Commissioners of the power of dismissing anyone, having by the enquiry instituted before the Andover Union Committee treated them as subordinates of Mr Chadwick.'¹

What an atrocious exhibition! And yet, after it, it was left to the malign Graham to deliver to Chadwick the stab under the fifth rib—covert and underhand—the hint that Chadwick was corrupt! Lewis and Head, according to Graham, were spotless—did he not know, he who had worked with them for five years? He himself had appointed Head—but, from the time of that very appointment, 'the vice from that time to the present had been that *Mr Chadwick was disappointed that he was not appointed to the vacant Commissionership*. From that time to the present, Mr Chadwick never worked cordially with the Commissioners!'²

Chadwick's cup of bitterness was full. 'I find', Bouverie wrote to him, 'several members felt strongly you had got hard measure, while talking about it in the division lobby, so you must not think that what was said to your dispraise was the expression of a general opinion'.³ 'That you had got hard measure'—this was ironical indeed! He was all but crazed with shame and anger and despair at the malicious, wholly unexpected slanders:

'a furious onslaught from the leaders of the two Parties in the House of Commons',

he called this debate,

'supported by a fire of calumnies. Those who were condemned are to be sustained, the reported injuries are to be unredressed, decisions without reasons,

¹ *Hansard*, Parliamentary Debates, 21st May 1847, col. 1211.

² *Ibid.*, cols. 1232–3.

³ E. P. Bouverie to Edwin Chadwick, 23rd May 1847. For Bouverie, see below.

arbitrary dicta are to be sustained: the witness who spoke to the truth in justice to gentlemen and in vindication of the law is assailed for malevolence.

'It is evident that with the reconstruction it is intended in the face of the Committee's reports to sustain Mr George Lewis and to displace me, who prepared the measure.

'Now if this be done in the face of the whole country I shall make my remonstrance and adduce my proofs and if the wrongdoers be still maintained, and myself in the face of the country, hunted down, I shall avail myself of an eligible opportunity for quitting it. . . .'¹

And so the next three weeks, the time still left before the critical committee stage of the Bill, were filled with furious bustle. Easthope pledged the full support of the *Morning Chronicle*.² Chadwick wrote off to all the former malcontents—Tufnell, Clements, and Walsham—for letters to support the charges he had brought before the Andover Committee.³ He asked both Nicholls and Lefevre for frank answers to the question, whether he had ever caballed against the Commissioners.⁴ He put himself in constant touch with Christie and other parliamentary supporters, such as Bouverie and W. Miles. And all the time he threw himself, with all the energy he had, into drawing up a huge self-vindication to counteract the effects of the Commissioners' *Letter*, and the slanders they had put about.

But Walsham not only refused to testify against the Commissioners, but became roundly abusive when Chadwick suggested it to him.⁵ Gilbert and Clements both returned no answer to his pleas.⁶ Neither Kay-Shuttleworth nor Tufnell made any sign. Lefevre would say of him only that, 'although my general impressions (which I would willingly forget) are unfavourable to you in respect to your relations as Secretary with my late colleagues and myself when I was in the Commission, I nevertheless appreciate the valuable advice and suggestions both on questions of principles and on those matters of detail . . . which we received from you on various occasions and especially in the early period of the Commission'.⁷ Chadwick could hardly build up his case on *that*.

Only Nicholls, of all his supposed friends, came to his aid. Braving the angry splutterings of Lewis and Head to whom he insisted, in loyalty,

¹ Edwin Chadwick to Huxtable, 27th May 1847.

² Edwin Chadwick to W. Day, 22nd May 1847.

³ 2nd June, to E. C. Tufnell. Walsham to Edwin Chadwick, 3rd June. Edwin Chadwick to Romilly, 7th June 1847.

⁴ Edwin Chadwick to G. Nicholls, 25th May 1847. E. Chadwick to Lefevre, 2nd June 1847.

⁵ Sir J. Walsham to Edwin Chadwick, 3rd June 1847.

⁶ Edwin Chadwick to Tufnell, 8th June 1847.

⁷ Lefevre to Edwin Chadwick, 2nd June 1847.

on showing the letter,¹ he gave Chadwick full permission to quote it and use it publicly.

'You ask me', he wrote, 'to bear testimony to what I have myself seen of your conduct during the period we have acted together in the Poor Law Commission, and to state whether in cases where you have differed from myself and colleagues you opposed us in a way to obstruct the public business; whether I have had reason to suspect you of secretly thwarting or caballing against the directions of the Board or opposing public measures from private or unworthy motives? Or whether your conduct generally was such as would induce me to decline your personal friendship or object to act with you in the public service? To each of these questions, I answer in the *negative*. I have differed from you in opinion as men of independent thought will occasionally differ, and on the question of the mode of transacting the office business, of which so much has been said, I always thought you wrong; but I never saw reason to doubt your sincerity or the integrity of your motives in anything which you advocated, however different the view which I myself took of it. I may further add that I have always felt great respect for your character and talents and highly estimate the benefits which you have been in no slight degree instrumental in conferring upon the community . . . etc.'²

No wonder Lewis and Head tried, by all means within their power, to prevent Nicholls sending the letter. Here was fine cannon-fodder for the coming debate!

But with the arrival of *Tufnell's* belated reply it really looked as if Chadwick could even turn to the offensive. After all, Carleton Tufnell was a Whig 'of the blood'; intermarried with the Bouverie family, the brother-in-law of Pleydell-Bouverie and the son-in-law of Chadwick's friend, the Earl of Radnor. His brother, Henry Tufnell, was one of the Whig Whips. And so his testimony was doubly valuable, as coming from a former Assistant Commissioner and as untainted with plebeian 'spite'; and trebly valuable if one took account of his virulent and forthright condemnation of the 'flinching of the Commissioners' and the petty treachery and gross mismanagement of Lewis and Head. In his long letter Tufnell independently and acrimoniously bore out every charge that Chadwick had hitherto made!³

With these letters in his possession, Chadwick began lobbying in all seriousness. He sent copies of the letters to everybody who was likely to stand up for him, to Christie, of course, to Courtenay, Roebuck, Poulette Scrope, Miles, Ewart, Easthope, Bouverie, and others.

The Lewis faction had been lulled into a false security. Russell was

¹ See Memoir by Mackay in Mackay's ed. of his *Poor Law*, vol. i, p. lxx.

² G. Nicholls to Edwin Chadwick, 25th May 1847.

³ E. C. Tufnell to Edwin Chadwick, 28th May 1847 (the *Resignation Letter*). Portions of this have been quoted earlier (Book III).

about to make him the offer of the Presidency of the new Poor Law Board; it was common knowledge that 'Lady Theresa has a majority in the Cabinet'. Confident that the victory was won, George Lewis had already made his preparations for quitting the old Poor Law Commission and was now canvassing the electors of Hereford for the seat in Parliament that would, of course, make him eligible as the head of the new Board. But Chadwick had now lined up his forces: Miles had the letter and was ready to read it; Easthope was appointed to lobby members when the Poor Law Bill came up on the order paper¹; and then, the mines all set and ready to be touched off, Chadwick gave the Cabinet a last warning. He sent both the letters to Sir George Grey for Russell's perusal, told him that he was also preparing a vindication which, together with the letters he would circulate only among private friends, but ended with the grim comment, 'unless circumstances make it necessary to call for *its public production*'.²

And so, no sooner had the order been moved for the House to go into Committee on the Poor Law Bill, than Russell found himself facing the severest opposition to his plans. It was all, it seems, quite unexpected. Bankes opened the debate by leaping to his feet and point-blank demanding a promise that Russell would not reappoint the old Commissioners. He was followed by Pechell who, mincing no words, also demanded 'an assurance that when the Bill had passed, no one would have to complain of the employment of the men who, in the situations they had held, had proved themselves so utterly unworthy of the confidence reposed in them'. Sneering that Lewis's candidature for Hereford 'showed what was expected', he threatened the Prime Minister that unless he gave the assurance, 'they would have to make up their minds to encountering the most energetic opposition to the Bill'. Then Miles sprang up and read Nicholls's solemn letter to an astonished House. Surely there could be no reply to this.³

And yet: 'I say', came the thin high tones of Russell, 'the practice of telling Assistant Commissioners that if they made complaints they would be met with displeasure, I do call that undermining the Commissioners appointed to carry out the Poor Law Act. . . . I do not impute such conduct to any particular motive. It is to him (Mr Chadwick) to explain his conduct. . . .' 'If anything further be said as to the case of Mr Chadwick that will tend to remove the impressions

¹ Edwin Chadwick to Sir J. Easthope, 17th June 1847.

² Edwin Chadwick to Sir G. Grey, 16th June 1847.

³ All these speeches from Committee stage of Bill, 17th June 1847, *Hansard*, Parliamentary Debates, cols. 666-95.

I have formed I should be happy to state it in the House: but I am sorry to say that the explanations given to-night have not removed the impression I had formed on the subject.' Russell point-blank refused to give the assurance.¹

Following him came Graham, to reinforce the very meagre effect of Lord John's speech; for his act of faith in Lewis as against the solemn testimony of Nicholls was hardly convincing. Graham's approach was entirely convincing; he was pontifical, he was grave, he was solemn, he spoke with authority, and he gave way to no bitterness. He would be sorry to say anything to *disparage* Mr Chadwick; he had no *wish* to disparage him; Mr Chadwick had carried out *certain* enquiries to every satisfaction, and had the question of dismissing him ever arisen, Graham would never have sanctioned it; the loss of Mr Chadwick to the public service would be a serious one and the Government certainly ought to find some situation for him—but not in the Poor Law office; ever since the appointment of Head—Graham sorrowfully repeated his former charge—'from that time, during the whole time I was at the Home Office, there were deep-seated misunderstandings between the Commissioners and the Secretary which were injurious to the public service'.¹

Up leapt Courtenay, the former Chairman of the Andover Enquiry. These sly insinuations were not, if he could help it, to terminate the debate as they had done upon the second reading. He had pledged himself to speak up for Chadwick, and in slashing style he made a masterful defence of the man and of the way he had delivered his evidence before the Andover Committee, and then concluded his fiery say by the uncompromising admission: 'With Mr Chadwick I have now some personal acquaintance which I had not when the Andover Enquiry commenced; but my opinion, founded on the evidence taken by the Commission, tested by repeated cross-examination by different members of the Committee, confronted as Mr Chadwick had been by the gentlemen to whom I have alluded, is that there has been nothing in Mr Chadwick's conduct, or in the manner in which he has given his evidence, that laid a sufficient ground for an impression in the mind of any honourable member as to his unfairness. I think', he concluded among cheers, 'that an injustice has been done to a man of great ability and Poor Law experience, whose great anxiety has been to extend sound principles of Poor Law administration.'

Symbolically, the debate ended with a violent controversy, almost

¹ All these speeches from Committee stage of Bill, 17th June 1847, *Hansard*, Parliamentary Debates cols. 666-95.

with a duel, between the champions of either side, Christie, hasty and excited, and the malicious, hot-tempered Charles Villiers. Christie was resolved to teach Villiers a lesson for his disingenuous speech on the second reading, and, after defending Chadwick, suddenly switched his speech to a sneer at Villiers's relationship to Lewis—'a relationship', he said, 'which at once accounts for all that gentleman's bitterness and in my opinion goes a long way to excuse it'.¹

Apoplectic, Villiers jumped from his seat, and making no disguise of his anger, once more tried to turn the House against Christie by raking up the old scandal of Parker's memorandum.² Graham rose and pointed out that Christie had apologized to him over that matter and he wanted to hear no more of it. Even angrier at being thus checked in his stride, Villiers began to taunt Christie on his examination of Sir Frankland Lewis; Christie coolly said that one of his remarks was untrue; Villiers ran on for a moment or two—then, realizing the purport of what had been said to him, broke off his speech, bellowing at his jeering adversary, 'How dare he use that language to me! How dare he use that language to me!'

On the surface Russell had had his own way. After the conclusion of the debate with the Speaker calling Christie and Villiers repeatedly to order, he got the House to go, quite obediently, into Committee. But for Chadwick the campaign had only begun. His *Vindicating Letter* was nearly ready—a succinct account of the inside history of the Poor Law Commission ever since its commencement. He told Roebuck that he would appeal in every way he could devise from 'being dismissed from the completion of my own measure'. 'It is very much', he said, 'like dismissing Rowland Hill for Maberley's frustration of his postage plan', and moreover, dismissing him 'because he had not made remonstrances in what someone else chose to consider proper form'.³

His letter to Grey, if formal, was outspoken. What he had said, he had said as a witness, not having had the opportunity to come forward as an accuser. He had been attacked for doing so. Charges had been made against him. Very well, why, he asked, had those charges not been made against him openly, as the events complained of occurred, so that he could have had the opportunity to answer them? 'The circumstances

¹ All these speeches from Committee stage of Bill, 17th June 1847, *Hansard*, Parliamentary Debates, cols. 666-95.

² In the 1846 session, Christie had read to the House a private memorandum of Parker's, recording a confidential interview given him by G. C. Lewis. The House was deeply shocked at what it deemed a breach of private confidences, and in Society Theresa Lewis made great play with Christie's unfortunate lapse of taste.

³ Edwin Chadwick to Roebuck, 24th June 1874.

set forth in the papers' [the full vindication was still to come], 'will, I confidently believe, show that my leading acts, during between fifteen and sixteen years of hard service, have been entirely for public objects, that each remonstrance I have made to the Government or that had been brought under competent and impartial investigation, has been affirmed, and entitle me, not only to an extension of confidence in the public service but' [and here was a dark threat] 'also by the breach of the express and implied engagements on which I entered the public service, by which breach the public have been extensively injured.'¹

Could Russell have been under any illusions as to the threat implied in those last lines? Everything pointed that way; everything seemed to show that Chadwick if pressed too far, might publish the letters which defined him as a 'fourth Commissioner', and next in the line of promotion to full Commissionership. Chadwick was circulating Tufnell's letter extensively to such influential peers as Radnor, Ellenborough, Brougham, and Bishop Blomfield.² Furthermore, the vindicating letter itself was at the moment a mere covering letter—the documented apologia which Chadwick envisaged was still to come. Who knew? If published it might prove so embarrassing that a new public enquiry might well be asked for?

To the outsider, Russell was unmoved and was still holding his course. He had easily carried the third reading of the Bill by 105 to 35, and from the Lords he need anticipate little difficulty. The Clarendons were just as aggrieved as ever, Lewis's resentment showed no signs of abating. And yet, despite the show of resolution, behind the scenes the scales already began to tip—ever so slightly—in Chadwick's favour. Lansdowne, hitherto a partisan of Lewis, read Chadwick's *Vindicating Letter* and confessed to him that he quite understood Chadwick's wishing to be heard in his own defence. Senior, who had thought the Parker memorandum 'a piece of sheer treason', was approaching Russell and pointing out that whatever may have happened in the past, Chadwick was far too valuable to be lost to the public service.³ And even Graham now not only urged that neither Lewis nor Head should go back to the Poor Law, but urged very strongly that a new place should be found for Chadwick himself.⁴ Above all, the Press and *The Times* especially, stood firmly for this course.

Chadwick himself was moving heaven and earth to press this advan-

¹ Covering letter to *First Vindicating Letter* to Sir G. Grey (16th June 1847).

² Edwin Chadwick to W. Miles, 21st June. Bishop Blomfield to Edwin Chadwick, 3rd July.

³ Edwin Chadwick to 'My Lord', 15th(?) July 1847.

⁴ *Greville Journals*, loc. cit. above.

tage home. And significantly, among his papers, lies a printed handbill—a summons to a meeting of M.P.s to his defence; and even more significant was the list of names that followed it, pencilled in Chadwick's hand:

'... That under these circumstances of the apparent injustice of proceedings by powerful and influential parties connected by family ties, and relying upon an appreciation of the public labours of Mr Chadwick, a meeting of gentlemen interested will be convened to consider what steps may be taken thereon to secure an examination conducive to the ends of public and private justice.'

In Chadwick's hand, follows: ¹

W. A. Aglionby	W. Marshall	John Hewitt Agre Belper	Chichester
E. P. Bouverie	P. I. Miles	Earl of Burlington	Richmond
J. Brotherton	W. Miles	Earl Howe	Hollist
E. Buller	Sir W. Molesworth	R. A. Christopher	Brougham
W. D. Christie	J. Morrison	V. G. Dowling	Ellesmere
R. Cobden	Capt. Pechell	Thom. Brushfield	Langdale
R. Curriel	Mark Phillips	E. E. Blyth	Liverpool
Ld. Dalmeny	J. A. Roebuck	Earl Fitzwilliam	Lovelace
Col. Drainer	H. Warburton	Earl Spencer	Portman
Marquess of Downe	E. Denison	Northampton	Radnor
A. Hastie	Ld. Wrottesley	Southampton	Roseberry
E. Hindley	Earl de Grey	Sir Baldwin Leighton	Rutland
J. Houldsworth	Rev. E. Dodson	J. H. Langston	Salisbury
J. Hume	Visct. Barrington	E. P. Bouverie	Yarborough
W. Hutt	Sir H. Verney	Rev. G. Dodson	Bis. London
J. Loch	Earl of Hardwicke	Earl Stradbroke	Chester
			Norwich.

Whether it was this meeting, or the threat of it, that finally decided John Russell, it is impossible to say. In any case, the meeting would have been but the last of a mounting series of demonstrations in Chadwick's favour. And so, not two days after a triumphant third reading of the Poor Law Bill, the Prime Minister made up his mind. Sir George Grey summoned Chadwick to say that when the Health of Towns Bill passed, he would have a place on the Board; and the Prime Minister let it be known to Lewis and Head that neither of them would be re-appointed to the new Poor Law Board!²

On Chadwick, the long acrimonious dispute settled at last in his favour, the effect was prodigious. He was overcome with relief and with pleasure. He had been proved right; his future was assured; on the Public Health Board, 'he was confident of the position which the public assigned him', and he immediately acquainted Southwood Smith

¹ Undated (June 1847).

² Edwin Chadwick to S. Smith, 26th June 1847.

with the news in a jubilant letter, in which he did not forget to urge his old friend to apply for the second paid post on the Board.¹ But at Kent House and the Grove, where the Villiers-Lewis family had, till this very moment, securely speculated on the certain disgrace of their enemy and the triumph of their hero, a bomb-shell could have produced no greater effect. 'There has been a most unpleasant rumpus between Clarendon and his family and John Russell about George Lewis's non-appointment to the new Poor Law Commission,' wrote Greville, 'about which the former have been in immense dudgeon.' A veteran door-keeper, and a lifelong friend of the Villiers, Greville himself was a trifle hurt at having so long been excluded from so interesting an exhibition.² 'I had heard something of it,' he went on, 'though C. never spoke to me about it at all, oddly enough, but had no notion they were so hot and resentful. Charles V[illiers] told me G. L[ewis] had been ill-used and treated with very little ceremony and that what he would have liked was to have had the offer and refuse it. I told him what Graham had said to me, that much as he liked and admired G.L. he would not have him put into the new Commission and that he did not think it would do to employ *any* of the old materials—not one of the old Commissioners, though they ought to be provided for in some other way. But the Duke of Bedford told me this morning that Clarendon had been quite outrageous about it, extremely excited and wrong-headed, very violent against John; and he had all the difficulty in the world in pacifying him and appeasing the quarrel. He did at last accomplish it, and all is peace and calm again . . .'³ But it was many months before Clarendon could refer to Chadwick and his friends as anything but a 'pack of curs yelping at his brother-in-law's heels . . .'⁴

But everything now turned upon his appointment under the Health of Towns Bill, and this itself turned upon the attitude of the House of Commons. At this precise juncture the Bill, knocked almost to pieces by the rough handling it received at the hands of the vested interests in the Commons, stumbled painfully out of committee with the Metropolis exempt from its provisions, with only one instead of two paid places on the Board, and even this at the derogatory salary of £1,000 per annum; it was less even than Chadwick received at the Poor Law office.

The implied suggestion that he was being demoted, the virtual

¹ Edwin Chadwick to S. Smith, 26th June 1847.

² This revelatory passage was indeed suppressed in the earlier edition of the *Memoirs*, and has only just seen the light in the Strachey-Fulford edition.

³ Greville (Strachey-Fulford ed., 1939), vol. v, p. 458 (28th June 1847).

⁴ Maxwell, *Letters of Fourth Earl of Clarendon*, vol. i, p. 286.

revival of the charges he thought he had shaken off, put Chadwick into another fit of peevishness and excitement, far exceeding anything he had previously suffered.

'Look at my present position!' he burst out to Senior, 'after every appeal of mine has been affirmed: every remonstrance made, sustained against adverse inclinations: I who have had no charges preferred against me, no hearing and no public condemnation by impartial members, I am proposed to be in effect removed arbitrarily to a lower place in emolument which all who believe myself to be contemplated, regard as a public and intentional slight.

'It may be said that the salary will be eventually altered and the position improved.

'Was I not told on the word of a Prime Minister and a gentleman as the condition on which I took office of Secretary to the Poor Law Commission that I should have the "position of a fourth commissioner" assured to me: a position which a regard to the public service, not to speak of gentlemanly feelings of propriety and a regard to the natural inalienable superiority of position of him who has devised superior measures, would have assured to me even if there had been no promise whatsoever? . . .'

He would refuse the contemplated position, and would claim an unpaid position on the Board in order to vindicate his own position—and so would Southwood Smith.

'I contemplate claiming to be retained in paid office', he went on, 'for the completion of poor law measures, on the grounds of the affirmation of my authentic remonstrances by the Government: on the virtual confirmation of my objections to the mode of doing business by the Law Officers and that the public have a right to the best information and experience in the service: that mine is established by all the facts: that on the grounds objected to by Lord John Russell to his own removal from office, I have a right to be protected from removal arbitrarily without reasons accompanied by proof that the public service has in any way suffered in such matters as have been in my hands. . . .'¹

But he had hardly made this remarkable declaration when his bluff was called. For a few days afterwards the Health of Towns Bill was withdrawn, and with it salary and place disappeared altogether. With the imminent third reading of the Poor Law Bill in the Lords, Chadwick would lose everything—his present position, his future prospects, and above all the personal vindication which the post of Public Health Commissioner alone would assure to him. 'Under the circumstances', he cried, 'my removal will be a public disgrace. . . . No one knows what are the intentions of the Government, or at least, all I know is that Lord John Russell takes an extraordinary course of vindication to those who have certainly been condemned on their own

¹ Edwin Chadwick to N. Senior, 7th July 1847 (this letter is endorsed 'not sent').

hearing by impartial members as well as by the public.'¹ 'It may be interest-begotten prejudice', he exclaimed bitterly, 'but I know no position more proper for myself than the direction of the measures and principles which I have myself proposed. I could very well have taken a seat at the Board of Health, but I cannot submit to public removal implying blame without the largest resistance I can make. . . .'²

He redoubled his efforts to influence the issue on the Third Reading of the Poor Law Bill, striving frantically to put again in motion all the wheels he had just stopped from turning. The *Vindicating Letter* was complete—a massive manuscript dossier of some sixty pages, together with six documentary appendices; with it he had prepared a second letter, just as massive, to rebut in detail all Lewis's arguments about the office business. He sent them to Grey and demanded that, like the Commissioners' letter, they should be laid before the House. He sent copies to every peer he knew. By methodical whips he arranged a rota of peers to speak for him in the now crucial debate of the 12th. He had every chance of success, for Blomfield, Salisbury, Radnor, Brougham, Ellenborough, and even Lansdowne approved the letter and the course he had taken. At the same time he was full of apprehension, fearing that the Government would make a formal complaint against him in the Lords for a 'breach of confidence', and would thus get rid of him altogether.

After the debate all seemed to have been in vain. His friends had spoken valiantly for him; but the result of that debate had been dismal—the Government triumphed easily, and with the dissolution of Parliament Chadwick's official career would come to an end. For ten days he was left in a state of miserable ignorance, fearing the Government were about to get rid of him altogether.

On 23rd July the writs went out for the election of a New Parliament, and Chadwick's paid appointment was about to expire. On that very day Chadwick at last received a summons from the Prime Minister. Sternly, Lord John Russell told him that he must forget what had passed. He could not expect to be appointed to the new Poor Law Board. The Government was prepared to make use of his services, but in Public Health matters, not for Poor Law purposes. It intended, if returned, to introduce a new Health of Towns Bill in the coming session. Russell was prepared to give Chadwick an assurance that he would be one of its paid Commissioners, but until then he could have no paid government employment.

¹ Edwin Chadwick to Bishop Blomfield, 12th July 1847.

² Edwin Chadwick to E. C. Tufnell, 15th July 1847.

Chadwick protested. His honour had been tarnished. To dismiss him now would carry the implication that he had been unworthy. He insisted, for his personal vindication, on remaining in the government service.¹

At this point Russell hit upon a solution. The difficulties of fitting London into a Public Health Bill had suggested to Lord Morpeth the advantage of setting up a Royal Commission on this intricate and dangerous subject. Russell now promised Chadwick that if his government were returned he would instantly set up a Royal Commission into London sanitation and put him in charge of it. It is not clear whether the post was to be paid or unpaid. What is certain is that when, as will be described below, the Commission was set up, there was an arrangement that Chadwick should be paid at the same rate as his former salary, and this pay was back-dated to the day he quitted the Poor Law office.²

Thus honour was satisfied and his future career ensured. The *Vindicating Letters* were put away, never to be heard of again. On this note of bathos Chadwick closed his official career as the architect and the administrator of a Poor Law system destined to last another hundred years.

¹ Edwin Chadwick to E. Gulson, 24th July 1847; E. Chadwick to Dr S. Smith, 23rd July 1847.

² H.O.74(2) (in Public Records Office), at 20th September 1847.

BOOK SEVEN

THE TRIUMPH OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH MOVEMENT

CHAPTER I

THE PUBLIC HEALTH MOVEMENT IN 1847

WHY did Russell make this sudden concession to Chadwick? What made him retain the services of the very man whom he had publicly vilified? Certainly it was not due to any feeling of affection. Twelve months later Chadwick had still to complain of his displeasure.

The fact was that the Public Health movement was now approaching flood tide, and Chadwick, on Press and platform, was its hero.

Almost nobody now dared deny the need for sanitary reform. As Muntz, the Birmingham member, bitterly exclaimed: 'There was a mania now for sanitary measures'. The opponents of Public Health were mostly driven to use arguments hailing from Bentham's *Book of Fallacies*. They agreed that sanitary reform was necessary but denied that this was the time or this the way to achieve it. For now both Whigs and Peelites vied for the privilege of introducing a Bill. In 1844 Chadwick had despairingly asked, 'What part does the question play in the discussions of the House?'¹ Yet in the session of 1847 the Protectionists sneered that Russell's interest in the question was a mere ruse to pick up votes at the forthcoming General Election.

This surprising change of attitude had been brought about by the propagandists and notably by the now flourishing Health of Towns Association. Its importance is attested by the frequency with which it was mentioned in the Commons during the debates on Public Health in 1847 and 1848. Lord Morpeth, in charge of the Health Bills in both the parliamentary sessions, quoted its figures, approved its petitions, and praised its members (of whom he was one) as 'men of the greatest talent and information'.² The opponents of Public Health, on the other hand, could hardly restrain their wrath. The major contribution of Mr Divett to the debates of 1848 was that the Association's Report on his constituency of Exeter was 'palpably exaggerated'.³ J. Stuart maintained that a famous report of the Association in which it had analysed the sanitary progress of some sixty provincial towns, was a

¹ E. Chadwick to A. Symonds, 18th July 1847.

² *Hansard*, Parliamentary Debates, vol. xci, 18th March 1847, col. 622; and vol. xcii, 11th May 1847, col. 669.

³ *Op. cit.*, vol. xcvi, 5th May 1848, cols. 724-6.