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THE HUMANIZING OF THE POOR LAW.

BY

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THE HUMANIZING OF THE POOR LAW.

A LECTURE DELIVERED TO THE HUMANITARIAN LEAGUE BY
J. F. OAKESHOTT ON FEBRUARY 15TH, 1894.

INTRODUCTION.

THE problem of poverty with which we are face to face at the end of the nineteenth century is very different from that which presented itself to our fifteenth century ancestors, before what is called "the origin of English poverty." The poverty that arises from causes permanent and inherent in human nature, from weakness of body, mind, or will, must be taken into account as a persistent social fact; and there is no reason to doubt that, as in the past and as at the present time, so also in the future will there be need of some form of relief of the partially and permanently disabled, and the hopelessly improvident members of the community, either by the State, by charitably disposed individuals, or by voluntary organizations. Natural poverty must be recognized as inevitable; but that other thing for which the term "pauperism" has been invented need not be treated as a permanent social phenomenon. It is a comparatively new growth.

In the feudal times the relief of the destitute was left to the monastic and other ecclesiastical organizations, and to the hospitals. There was no enquiry into the causes of destitution; application for relief was the one thing needful. The inevitable consequence of this want of discrimination was that the very machinery for the relief of the poor became a means of increasing their number and deteriorating their character. The temporarily destitute tended to become the professional beggar. But the downfall of feudalism and the transition to an industrial and commercial society was accompanied by the growth of a pauperism which differed widely from the poverty of preceding centuries, and completely outgrew the machinery for its relief. The reckless waste of national resources by Henry the Eighth; the dissolution and spoliation of the monasteries, and the resultant transfer of land and other property from the possession of semi-popular trustees to nobles greedy for increased rents; the debasement of the currency which raised the cost of the necessaries of life, and was not accompanied by a proportionate increase in wages; and the confiscation of the lands belonging to the craft-gilds—all combined to bring about a state of distress and misery amongst the masses of the people, which has persisted in varying extent and intensity down to the present day. The Agrarian Revolution of the sixteenth century, by which men were displaced to make room for sheep, and the impoverishment of the small farmers which followed in its train; the discovery of a new world and the consequent birth and development of the "great industry" and the vast foreign com-

merce of to-day ; the continuous enclosure of common lands, and the enforced aggregation of men into the towns had all also added to the deterioration of the national life, and contributed to establish pauperism as a national institution.

From 1536 Parliament attempted to cope with the problem by enacting that voluntary alms should be collected in each parish for the purpose of relieving the impotent poor. "Every preacher, parson, vicar, and curate," says the Act, "as well in their sermons, collections, bidding of the beads as in the time of confession, and making of wills, is to exhort, move, stir, and provoke people to be liberal for the relief of the impotent." But this scheme failed, and was repealed four years later. In 1551 another attempt was made to establish a Voluntary Poor Fund. A book was directed to be kept in every parish, containing the names of the householders and the impotent poor, and in Whitsun week collectors were to be appointed whose duty it was on the following Sunday at Church to "gently ask every man and woman what they of their charity will give weekly towards the relief of the poor. . . . If any one able to further this charitable work do obstinately and frowardly refuse to give or do discourage others, the Ministers and Churchwardens are to gently exhort him. If he will not be so persuaded, the bishop is to send for him to induce and persuade him by charitable ways and means, and so, according to his discretion, take order for the reformation thereof." This Act was also ineffective and was repeated word for word in another Act in 1555. Eight years afterwards a further step was taken by enacting, that "If any person of his froward wilful mind shall obstinately refuse to give weekly to the relief of the poor according to his ability, the bishop shall bind him to appear at the next petty sessions, and at the said sessions the justices shall charitably and gently persuade, and move the said obstinate person to extend his charity towards the relief of the poor . . . and if he will not be persuaded, it shall be lawful for the justices with the churchwardens, or one of them, to tax such obstinate person according to their good discretion what sum the said obstinate person shall pay weekly . . . and if he refuses, the justices shall, on complaint of the churchwardens, commit the said obstinate person to gaol until he shall pay the sum so taxed with the arrears." At the close of Elizabeth's reign the evil had become so wide-spread and threatening, there were so many "valiant beggars or sturdy vagabonds" to be executed, that the existing methods of relief were recognized as altogether inadequate ; and the responsibility of the whole community for its existence was admitted by the legislature in the enactment of the great Poor Law of Elizabeth in 1601. The foundations of a collective organization of relief were laid ; and the main part of the machinery thus established has persisted down to the present day.

The Act of 1601, following the classification made by Bishop Ridley's Committee fifty years before, made a marked distinction between "the poore by impotencie," "the poore by casualtie," and "the thriftles poore." It provided relief for those who could not work, work for those who were able and willing, and imprisonment in

the house of correction or the common gaol for the incorrigibly idle vagabond. With modifications this law remained in operation down to 1835.

"Whatever flaws," says J. R. Green, "a later experience has found in these measures, their wise and humane character formed a striking contrast to the legislation which had degraded our Statute-book from the date of the Statute of Labourers." "The establishment of pauperism by law," as Cobbett called it, could not be avoided. It was a necessary link in the chain of progress.

The first workhouse was established by John Cary in Bristol in 1697, and during the following twenty-five years the number of workhouses authorized by private Acts increased to such an extent that the "house" became the recognized test of destitution, and it was enacted that "No poor who refused to be lodged and kept in workhouses should be entitled to ask or receive parochial relief." In 1723 a general permissive Workhouse Act was passed. But, owing to the want and misery brought on the people by a succession of bad harvests, the changes in industry, and the French War, the test broke down and was abolished by Parliament in 1796. Then out-door relief became universal, and wages were supplemented out of the rates, the allowances so given being regulated according to the price of flour or bread, and the size of the applicant's family. The consequences were that the burden on the ratepayers was enormously increased, the independent labourer was reduced to pauperism, industry was disorganized, labour and morals were deteriorated, and the country brought to the verge of ruin. The great Report of the Commissioners appointed in 1832 to inquire into the administration and practical operation of the Poor Laws must be read in order to apprehend the real condition of the people.

The Report of 1834 formed the basis of the New Poor Law of 1835, under which relief is now administered. The spirit of the report, and the principles of the remedial measures recommended by the Commissioners, can be gathered from the following quotation :

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

"It may be assumed, that in the administration of relief, the public is warranted in imposing such conditions on the individual relieved as are conducive to the benefit either of the individual himself, or of the country at large, at whose expense he is to be relieved.

"The first and most essential of all conditions, a principle which we find universally admitted, even by those whose practice is at variance with it, is, that his situation on the whole shall not be made really or apparently so eligible as the situation of the independent labourer of the lowest class. Throughout the evidence it is shown, that in proportion as the condition of any pauper class is elevated above the condition of independent labourers, the condition of the independent class is depressed ; their industry is im-

paired, their employment becomes unsteady, and their remuneration in wages is diminished. Such persons, therefore, are under the strongest inducements to quit the less eligible class of labourers and enter the more eligible class of paupers. The converse is the effect when the pauper class is placed in its proper position, below the condition of the independent labourer. Every penny bestowed that tends to render the condition of the pauper more eligible than that of the independent labourer, is a bounty on indolence and vice. We have found that as the poor's-rates are at present administered, they operate as bounties of this description to the amount of several millions annually."

THE NEW POOR LAW.

Under the Act of 1835, powers were given to the Poor Law Commissioners (who were replaced in 1848 by the Poor Law Board, and reconstituted in 1871 as the Local Government Board) to make and issue rules, orders, and regulations for the purposes contemplated by the Poor Laws, and Boards of Guardians were established for their local administration. Relief is now given under a series of General Orders and Instructional Circulars issued by the Local Government Board and its predecessor the Poor Law Board. Whilst local Guardians are not supposed to act contrary to these regulations, they have considerable latitude in administration. Theoretically, the advantage of uniformity of method, obtained by means of the supervision of a central authority, is combined with that of local administration and responsibility, so that the system should be all that is admirable. Practically, however, the regulations are of too permissive and suggestional a character, whilst the red-tape tendencies of the central department are often as obstructive of reform as they are productive of uniform and strict administration. The machinery for compelling recalcitrant Boards to adhere to the regulations is ridiculously inadequate. The continued receipt by Boards of Guardians of aid for certain specified purposes from the Imperial Exchequer should be made dependent on the due performance of the requirements of the Local Government Board, in the same way as the receipt of Education Grants depends upon the maintenance of a certain standard of educational and sanitary efficiency in the public elementary schools.

Boards of Guardians are constituted for the purpose of relieving and not preventing existing destitution. They are to relieve "paupers," and not to assist the poor. They can only expend money in the provision of food, clothing, lodging, medical attendance, etc., for the pauper. They cannot legally incur any expense in establishing a poor person in trade, or in purchasing tools or implements of trade for him, in replacing a cow or horse which may have died, in redeeming goods from pledge, in repurchasing furniture or goods seized for rent, in replacing furniture or goods destroyed by fire, or in enabling a poor person to get work. They have little option in the general methods of giving relief, and none in the case of the out-door able-bodied, though many Boards are lax to the verge of illegality. The regulations provide that no relief shall be given to any able-bodied male person while he is employed for wages or any remuneration, and that every able-bodied male relieved out of the workhouse

shall be set to work, and be kept employed so long as he continues to receive relief. The exceptions to these rules are

- (1) Cases of sudden and urgent necessity, defined as " destitution requiring instant, but not permanent, relief " ;
- (2) Cases of sickness, accident, or bodily or mental infirmity ;
- (3) Burial expenses ;
- (4) Widows within the first six months of widowhood ;
- (5) Widows with legitimate child or children dependent on them and incapable of earning their livelihood, and with no illegitimate child born after the commencement of widowhood ;
- (6) Wives and children of soldiers, sailors, marines, or militiamen, or of prisoners or convicts ;
- (7) Wives and children of not able-bodied persons not residing in the parish.

Out-door relief is given in money and in kind, but in the case of able-bodied persons it is laid down that " one half at least shall be given in articles of food or fuel or in other articles of absolute necessity." Relief may also be given by way of loan. The Relieving Officer has to investigate the cases of all applicants ; he can give temporary relief in kind, where necessary, and must report to the Guardians as to the health, ability to work, etc., of the applicant and his family. The Guardians are then to decide on the merits of each individual case.

Indoor relief is administered under a General Order issued in July, 1847. Admission to the workhouse is obtained by order of the Guardians, by provisional order of an Overseer or Relieving Officer, or by the Master or Matron without an order, in any case of sudden or urgent necessity. On admission, the applicant is examined by the Medical Officer, is made to bathe, is deprived of his or her clothes and possessions, which are put away in a bag to be given up on discharge, and is sent to the proper ward. Inmates are classified under eight heads :—

- (1) Aged and infirm men ;
- (2) Able-bodied men and youths over 15 ;
- (3) Boys from 7 to 15 ;
- (4) Aged and infirm women ;
- (5) Able-bodied women and girls over 15 ;
- (6) Girls from 7 to 15 ;
- (7) Children under 7 ;
- (8) Infirmary inmates.

A further sub-division may be made when it is desirable for moral reasons. The management of the workhouse is in the hands of the Master and Matron, whose duties are set forth in the regulations in the minutest detail, from the daily reading of prayers and saying grace before and after meals, to the cooking and distribution of the food, the general inspection of the wards, and the maintenance of order amongst the inmates. The temperature of the water for the baths is even laid down in the rules. A visiting committee of the Guardians should visit the workhouse once a week. Although many of the regulations which are put in a permissive form might well have

been made imperative, it must be admitted that, allowing for the ideas prevalent about the poor fifty years ago, the General Consolidated Order is a remarkably humane, even though it be an official document. If it had been acted on by all Boards of Guardians and workhouse officials according to its letter, to say nothing of its spirit, I doubt whether the condition of an indoor pauper would not to-day be in many respects more desirable than that of the sweated seamstress or casual labourer outside. But the regulations have not been, and are not carried out, and I have found many individual Guardians, full of sympathy and humanity, who are almost entirely ignorant of the powers which the law gives them, and of the duties it imposes upon them.

In the early stages of the administration of the new Poor Law the reaction against high rates and wholesale relief led to the grossest excesses and cruelties. From the Poor Law Board down to the local Boards of Guardians and the ratepayers, almost the only thought was "reduce the expenditure and save the rates." Year after year the Annual Report congratulated the nation on the fact that the cost of relief was diminishing when compared with the wealth and population of the country. But it was not so much the system which was at fault as the administration of it by a department thoroughly enmeshed in red-tape, and by Guardians who were ignorant, inhumane men, who systematically opposed all improvements and were determined to render life in the workhouse as humiliating and unbearable as possible, and, in fact, to make poverty a new crime. It is not to be wondered at that one humane writer denounced the Poor Law Board as "a costly abuse and a pernicious sham," and averred that many Boards of Guardians consisted of "the most pestilent persons in the parish." Nassau Senior, who cannot be described as a sentimental writer, confirms this criticism of the men who were chosen to administer the law. "In some towns," he says, "whole Boards of Guardians have been elected from among those hostile to the law, and who come forward for the avowed purpose of defeating it. In others, its friends and its enemies have met at the same Board, and the administration of relief has been made the subject of continual struggle or mischievous compromise; or the better-educated have been driven away by the strife, and left the poor and the ratepayers a prey to the corrupt and the ignorant."

Charles Dickens, in "Oliver Twist" and also in many articles in "Household Words" and "All the Year Round," has left graphic descriptions of the lives of the workhouse poor from the forties to the sixties, when they were given the "alternative of being starved by a gradual process in the house, or by a quick one out of it," and Thomas Noel's "Pauper's Drive" puts in the finishing touches to the picture of State-organized inhumanity. The refrain,

"Rattle his bones over the stones;
He's only a pauper, whom nobody owns!"

sums up the general view of the ratepayers of those days.

The growth of humanitarian feeling has had its influence on Poor Law Administration, and the inhumanity of fifty years ago would not

be tolerated by public opinion to-day. At the same time the administration of the law is still wanting in humanity. Over the entrance of Dante's Hell was written, "Abandon hope, all ye who enter here," and if the effect of our Poor Law system were to be summed up in a single sentence we should have to use the same words. In the desire of ensuring that "the situation of the paupers shall not be made really or apparently so eligible as the situation of the independent labourer of the lowest class," we deliberately feed them worse than criminals (the Prison dietary is luxurious in comparison with the Poor Law standard), and we allow the law to be administered with such harshness that many men and women every year deliberately prefer death by starvation outside the workhouse to accepting relief from the rates with its deprivation of the privileges of citizenship and its dishonourable stigma of pauperism alike on aged and young, infirm and able-bodied, deserving and undeserving. Mr. Charles Booth in his recently published work, "The Aged Poor in England and Wales," states that "as regards entering the workhouse, it is the one point on which no difference of opinion exists among the poor. The aversion to the 'house' is absolutely universal, and almost any amount of suffering and privation will be endured by people, rather than go into it." A recent Return ordered by the House of Commons (C—476) shows that in London alone, in 1892, no less than thirty-one persons, of whom thirteen were fifty years old and upwards, were certified by the verdicts of coroner's juries to have died of starvation. In no case could any application for relief be traced; and they were never discovered to be in want by the Relieving Officers, or by any charitable society or individual. Who can say how many times thirty-one would have to be multiplied, if a similar return were made for the whole country, and if we included all those whose deaths were accelerated by starvation, but which were declared by juries to have been due to "natural causes?" And even then there must be added that host of similar deaths which never come before the coroner at all. It is too often forgotten that, though it may be undesirable to make the workhouse too comfortable and attractive, yet at the same time every improvement in the treatment of its inmates must react on the conditions of life of the workers outside, and thus indirectly aids the movement for bettering the lives of the mass of the people.

The law must be humanized, but it cannot be too emphatically affirmed that the humanizing of the treatment of the inmates of our workhouses and of the out-door poor depends, and must depend, almost entirely upon the men and women in whose hands the administration and supervision are placed. No alteration of the law, no substitution of "shall" for "may," in the Local Government Board's regulations will abolish harshness and inhumanity. In the final resort, the settlement of the question is in the hands of the ratepayers who elect the Boards of Guardians, by whom the officers are appointed. The relief of the poor is the real work for which the Boards are elected, although many Guardians still think that they are merely *Guardians of the Rates*, and aim rather at reduction of expenditure than at that efficiency of administration, which includes a careful avoidance

of extravagance and waste, whilst at the same time allowing for the treatment of paupers as human beings.

THE POOR WHO SHOULD NOT BE PAUPERS.

In considering the reform of the Poor Law from the humanitarian point of view it is necessary to settle what people should legitimately come under the category of paupers. The present system of lumping together every man, woman, and child who receives relief out of the rates, regardless both of their past history and their future prospects, and also of the kind of relief required, may be convenient to officials, but it is certainly both unscientific and unsatisfactory. The first step towards the humanization of the system must be the adoption of a radically different treatment for the deserving and the undeserving. Those who deserve relief must be separated from those who require punitive or restrictive action. We must, therefore, begin by removing as many as possible from the operation of the Poor Law.

According to the latest official statistics (C—7180) 783,597 persons received public relief on the 1st January, 1893, in England and Wales alone. Of these 206,584 were relieved inside, 576,870 outside the workhouse, and 143 both inside and outside. They are classified as follows:—

Adult men	165,726
Adult women	296,530
Children	236,185
Insane	78,160
Vagrants	7,139
	<hr/>
	783,740

A further analysis shows that there were 34,210 able-bodied men, 72,968 able-bodied women, 131,516 not able-bodied men, and 223,562 not able-bodied women. That is to say that nearly one-half were not able-bodied, over one-third were children, one-tenth were insane, and not quite one-eighth were able-bodied. Rather less than one-half of the total number were sixty-five years old and upwards.

THE AGED.

The principle of State pensions for civil servants, military and naval officers and men, policemen, postmen, hospital nurses and elementary school teachers, has been accepted by the nation, which is quite prepared to endorse its application to every man and woman over sixty years of age, no matter what may be their social standing. But, pending the formulation of a national scheme of pensions for the aged, it is quite possible, under the existing law, for every poor person over sixty to be transformed into a pensioner by the allowance of adequate out-door relief. The scanty pittance of a few shillings, never quite enough, and often ludicrously insufficient to live upon, even with a little food, should be supplemented by a general extension of the alms-house or cottage-home system started by the Guardians of the West Derby (Liverpool) Union, whose example is being followed by

the more humane and enlightened Boards in the provinces. The *Pall Mall Gazette* of the 23th December, 1893, thus describes the scheme :

“At West Derby married couples that apply for relief, providing they be respectable, well-behaved, and above sixty years of age, are not required to go into the workhouse. The Poor Law authorities have built for their special use a row of one-roomed cottages near the workhouse, at Walton-on-the-Hill. These cottages are cheerful, cosy little places, with an individual, homelike air about them which is decidedly pleasant. Evidently the inmates have been allowed to bring with them some few at least of their own most cherished possessions. The furniture is of the plainest description but well made. The beds are soft and warm, the arm-chairs are easy if not luxurious, and, judging by the appearance of the fires, the supply of coal must be unlimited. Thus the majority of those who live there are probably better housed than they have ever been before in their lives. They are required to keep their rooms neat and clean, but this is no difficult task, as they have plenty of hot water close at hand, and all the necessary utensils for cleaning, as well as for cooking.

The old couples have their meals *tête-à-tête*. Their dinners are served to them hot from the general kitchen, but they must prepare their other meals for themselves. All their food is excellent in quality, and in quantity is as much, if not more, than they can possibly eat. Every day each couple receives a loaf of bread, and once a week a supply of tea, sugar, butter, etc. With their provisions they are free to do just as they like. They may save part of their dinner for their supper if they choose, or eat all their sugar and butter on the day it is dealt out. No one will interfere with them, so long as they do not ask for fresh supplies until the appointed day comes round. This is a trifle, a touch of consideration which costs neither money nor trouble; but none the less it is a real and much-appreciated boon.

The rooms are regarded as the special property of those who live in them; and, although their friends may visit them on certain days, and their neighbours look in upon them from time to time, neither the one nor the other may do so uninvited. The inmates are free, if they choose, to deny admittance to all visitors, excepting, of course, the officials whose duty it is to look after them. Thus, so long as they conduct themselves properly, the old people are to all intents and purposes in these cottages as in homes of their own. And keenly do they seem to appreciate their well-being. Those who maintain that a contented pauper is a thing unknown would do well to pay Walton-on-the-Hill a visit. There they would find paupers who are not only contented, but happy—as happy, at least, as people after sixty are capable of being. Life in a cottage home is evidently by no means the dull, wearisome, hopeless business it is in a workhouse. At least the inmates of the cottages at Walton-on-the-Hill seem alert and interested in all that is going on around them.

An important point about this experiment is that the unusual degree of comfort the old people enjoy under the new system is the result not of a lavish expenditure of the ratepayers' money, but rather of infinite care and thought on the part of the local Poor Law authorities. These cottages are not expensive institutions. Two of them can be built for about £100, and provided with the necessary fittings and furniture for an additional £15 each. Owing to the necessity of keeping up separate fires and lights, the cost per head of living in a cottage is higher than in a workhouse, but the difference is not great. In the workhouse at Walton-on-the-Hill, a man and woman together cost at least 7s. a week, and considerably more if either of them chance to be infirm or delicate. In a cottage-home a couple cost

rather under 9s. a week. The extra 2s. a week can hardly be regarded as a very heavy price to pay for enabling two poor old people to pass their last days in peace and some moderate degree of comfort."

There is no reason why this method of dealing with the aged should be confined to married couples. It might be arranged to include, of course at their option, all aged paupers who are in good enough health to be out of an infirmary or hospital. Whatever may have been the previous life of men and women who have now reached the age of sixty, and are not inmates of a prison, it is no advantage to the community to add any burden to their declining years. We may as well let by-gones be by-gones. To allow them to die in an atmosphere of freedom, spared from the restraints of workhouse life, would in itself be a boon of no small value, and should not alarm the greatest sticklers for the abolition of out-door relief. And it would be well also if we were for once to act logically, and were to transform the weekly dole paid to 37,000 widows in the shape of out-door relief, into a pension. The same thing applies to all those disabled men and women who, though incapacitated for earning their living, are yet not sufficiently infirm or sick to be permanent inmates of an infirmary or hospital. The endowment of widowhood and disablement might be added to the endowment of old age. And it must be emphatically affirmed that no pension scheme will be satisfactory which depends upon any contribution from the annuitants, or is confined to those who have never received Poor Law relief. The pensions should, indeed, be more free than Poor Law relief is now, and the fact that a little money has been saved, though not sufficient to live on, ought not to be made a disqualification.

THE CHILDREN.

In dealing with the children there can hardly be two opinions as to the advisability, as well as the humanity, of the most generous treatment. They, at any rate, should be kept free from the workhouse taint. None but children in arms should be in the workhouse.

The present system of bringing them up is a mixed one. Some, the orphans and deserted only, are boarded out in country cottages with foster-parents, or in a cluster of cottages under the superintendence of masters and matrons appointed by the Guardians; others are kept in the workhouse in the care of a special nurse, or not infrequently in that of some of the inmates; whilst in most Unions it is customary to send the bulk of the children to large schools, which, in the case of London are in the suburbs or in the country.

The Boarding-Out System is now adopted by most Boards of Guardians and should be made compulsory. Three-fifths of the indoor children are orphans or have been deserted by their parents, and their training and starting in life is therefore entirely in the hands of the State. The problem they present is not complicated by any question of parental control or authority. But with regard to the "ins and outs," there is a difficulty which must be faced. An inmate can discharge himself at twenty-four, or at most at forty-eight hours' notice.

and it often happens that the Guardians are put to the trouble and expense of sending into the country to fetch the children to go out with their parents, only to have them once more on their hands, when the latter come into the house again after an interval of a few days. It is not easy to see how this class of cases can be met, without upsetting a favourite middle-class bugbear. While it is dangerous to relieve the parents of the responsibility of maintaining their children, yet under these conditions the children run a tremendous risk of becoming permanently pauperized, besides having their education frustrated by frequent removal from school. The problem is one belonging to London and other large centres of population rather than to sparsely inhabited rural districts, where every one in a village is known, and can be traced with comparative ease. The welfare of the children should, however, be the first consideration. When parents have given evidence of being habitual, although intermittent, paupers, they should be deprived of their legal right to take their children away from school, but wherever possible, they should be compelled to contribute towards their maintenance; and in cases of wilful and persistent neglect of parental duties and disregard of children's rights they should be punished under the criminal law. At the worst the evil of letting the parents go unpunished is less disastrous than that of wrecking the lives of the children.

The breaking up of the large workhouse schools is necessary for many reasons. However willing the authorities may be to put the children of paupers on an equality with their schoolfellows outside by sending them to the public elementary schools and by abolishing the wearing of a uniform dress, the workhouse taint must cling to them, merely from the fact that their maintenance comes out of the poor rate. On the whole it seems more practicable to abolish the workhouse schools than to transform them into national elementary boarding schools, in which the maintenance of the children as well as their education would be in the hands of the Education Department. The health of the children also demands that the herding of them together by hundreds in immense buildings, part barracks and part prison, should be discontinued. Epidemics are frequent and must always be serious amongst a crowd of children in one building. The children of the poor start life handicapped in physique. It is notorious, too, that they are specially liable to ophthalmia; but it is startling to find how many of the workhouse children must suffer from bad teeth. In a pamphlet recently issued by Mr. R. D. Pedley, it is stated that in the case of 3,145 London pauper children whose teeth, numbering some seventy thousand, were examined, only 707 teeth were found to be sound. In matters of education, it may be possible, though it is obviously most undesirable to treat children *en masse*; but in matters of health they *must* be dealt with individually. And this individual attention cannot be efficiently given in crowded schools. Each Board of Guardians sends members from time to time to report on the condition of the schools, and there are three Local Government Board Inspectors for the same purpose, whilst the boarded-out children are looked after by local committees and an official lady-inspector. But

the present supervision is almost useless. Scandals are constantly being brought to light with regard to the food and clothes supplied and the general treatment of the children. Reforms will be practically futile, because the whole system is radically unsound.

The control of the education of the children should be taken out of the hands of the Poor Law authorities. Boards of Guardians have no pretensions to be educational bodies, and workhouse schools, at the best, are bad. The teachers are often untrained and ill-paid. Twelve shillings a week and a daily dinner is considered sufficient remuneration for a schoolmistress in one London Union. It is, therefore, not surprising that the standard of education is deplorably low. All the children should be sent to the national elementary day schools, and as long as the large workhouse schools continue to exist, they should be controlled by the Education Department, and supervised by its inspectors. None but very young children should be in the workhouse. I think there is no sadder sight to be seen than a band of children doomed to spend their days in the company of a number of aged women, in an atmosphere of perpetual melancholy, and deprived of all the joys of childhood. The kind people who send them sixpences and toys at Christmas never know what really becomes of their gifts. How many of the sixpences find their way to the public-house no man can tell, but I know that this well-intentioned annual gift of an anonymous reader of a certain weekly journal is the cause of much pain and tribulation, whilst, as to the toys, I have seen in one workhouse a rocking horse and another horse on wheels carefully put away so that the children could not use them.

Too little consideration is given by the Local Government Board and the majority of Boards of Guardians to the training of the boys and girls under their control. The boys for the most part are placed out as errand-boys, enlist in the army, are sent to sea, are emigrated, or are apprenticed to some trade. All the children should receive adequate technical training at the end of their elementary education, in order to give them as good a start in life as possible, and the apprenticeship to unskilled trades should at once be abandoned. There is no provision made, so far as the Local Government Board and the Boards of Guardians are concerned, for helping the boys after they have left the schools. The girls fare far worse than the boys in the attention given to their training. If they have an opportunity of picking up a little knowledge of sewing, knitting, and darning, and, in exceptional cases, plain cooking, they are lucky. The only career which seems to be thought possible for them is that of domestic service, for which they receive no special training. Consequently they become not skilled workers, but domestic drudges of the most incompetent and hopeless type. Out of 446 girls sent out in 1892 in London, 441 became domestic servants. Once out at service they are off the hands of the Guardians and at the mercy of the world, which is thoughtless and unsympathetic. They have no homes, and, but for the existence of charitable societies such as the Girls' Friendly Society and the Metropolitan Association for Befriending Young Servants, they would have no refuge to go to in case of need, and little chance of

redress for any injustice or wrong done to them by inconsiderate mistresses and their families. Many drift from domestic service to life on the streets. There ought to be rate-supported homes, other than the workhouse, to which girls out of a place could go as a right and not as a matter of charity; and they should at least have some voice in choosing their occupation at home, and equal opportunity with the boys of settling across the sea. There are no statistics to show what proportion of the children who are born paupers close their lives in the workhouse, and the opinions of different Guardians I have consulted vary considerably; but it is certain that the amount of adult pauperism must be reduced by cutting off the supply of juvenile paupers.

THE SICK AND INSANE.

From the evidence given before a Committee of the House of Lords, which reported in 1888, it appears that the idea of treating the sick poor merely as sick, and not as paupers, was so objectionable to the Birmingham Guardians that they "determined to make all persons who come to their infirmary pass through the gate which leads to the workhouse grounds, so that they may not draw a distinction between the workhouse and the infirmary." This peculiar refinement of inhumanity has not commended itself to many other places, but it is quite time that the sick, insane, and temporarily disabled, who make up three-tenths of the adult recipients of relief, should, along with the aged and the children, be depauperized. The workhouse infirmary should be rechristened the local hospital, or affiliated to it, and the whole machinery of medical and surgical relief should be taken out of the hands of the Guardians. The public provision for the sick; the building and maintaining of hospitals of all kinds, and of dispensaries, asylums, and other similar institutions, together with those already in existence, should be placed under a popularly elected authority. In London one-third of the cost of these public institutions is already defrayed out of the rates. In the meantime, however, the large number of epileptics now classified as "not able-bodied," and kept in separate wards of the workhouse should be placed in the infirmary. The lying-in ward should also be detached from the workhouse. The care and nursing of the sick should be placed in the hands of skilled nurses, and no paupers should be employed in the infirmaries. At present the staff of nurses is insufficient, and assistance has to be obtained from paupers. In London, indeed, the state of things is so bad that it has been described by Miss Gertrude Dix in the *Westminster Review* for December, 1893, as "a squalid scramble, miscalled nursing."

THE WORKHOUSE.

Nearly one-third of the workhouse inmates are sixty-five years old or over, so that until we have arranged a national pension and almshouse scheme they must remain in the house. But their lives may be rendered more tolerable in a score of ways. Many of the workhouse buildings are not fit to be used; they are often mere wooden shanties,

little better than make-shifts. In one case an erection of corrugated iron, formerly occupied by cholera patients, serves as at once a living and sleeping ward of a London workhouse. Some buildings are so bad that they have been condemned as insanitary even by our not too squeamish or active local authorities. In many cases the drains are hopelessly bad, proper warming and ventilation are quite impossible, and the lavatory and closet accommodation is grossly inadequate. The more modern buildings are better in these respects. But in the internal arrangements there is still much room for reform. The same building often contains aged men and women, epileptics and lunatics, able-bodied of both sexes, and a sprinkling of children. There is insufficient room for carrying out the present system of classification, to say nothing of any modification of it. It is by no means unusual for a workhouse to contain permanently a number of inmates considerably in excess of its authorized number. One London Board of Guardians has to farm out its paupers to a country Union. The wards are overcrowded with beds; and in one notorious instance a few months ago twenty-nine men in one ward and three women in another had to, and probably still have to find their night quarters on the floor.

Little or no thought seems to be given to the decoration of the wards. In most cases it seems to be left to the artistic taste of the chaplain. A great improvement can be made by the introduction of a larger number of coloured and other pictures, and the removal of some of the superfluous Scripture texts and mottoes, often of a far from comforting character, which are the main attempts at the adornment of the walls. A regular and sufficient supply of daily and weekly papers, chosen to suit the political opinions and literary tastes of the inmates, should be provided. This is one of the chief points in which the intolerance of some Guardians finds its vent. The libraries, which usually consist of old volumes of the "Tract Magazine" and "Sunday at Home," and the like, might be varied by the addition of more books of a secular and lighter kind. Most Boards of Guardians would gladly accept gifts of pictures, books, and newspapers, and illustrated papers are especially desired. Spectacles, to suit the sight of the reader, should be provided whenever they are required. More encouragement might be given to visitors in the arrangement of entertainments for the inmates, who might reasonably be expected to appreciate a little music and recreation all the year round, and not only at Christmas time. Some Boards are so churlish as to refuse all offers of concerts, etc., but as a rule help of this kind is welcomed by the Guardians, and always enjoyed by the inmates. More frequent visits from friends might be permitted, and the well-conducted inmates might be allowed out for some hours on every fine day, instead of once or twice a month, when the unwonted freedom sometimes leads them into trouble. Some kind of easy work, under the Brabazon Employment Scheme, such as making Smyrna mats, wool-work, netting, etc., might be given to any of the inmates who are too old to be put to a regular task. The deadly monotony of workhouse life could be lightened by the ample provision of games, such as draughts, chess, dominoes, cards, etc., and the inmates ought to be allowed to sit round

the tables or the fires, instead of, as in too many instances, being confined to one particular place on the settle round the room. The pauper uniform should be abolished for both men and women. Tobacco and snuff should be given to those who want them, as well as extra tea, which the old women might well be allowed to make for themselves. There is also no valid reason why friends should be prohibited from giving little presents of food, not included in the dietary, from time to time. Proper accommodation, as the law directs, should be made so that all old married couples, desiring it, may live together.

Greater variety might be made in the dietary without any additional expense. Under the present hard-and-fast scale of dietary, which, though varying in almost every workhouse, is based on a Local Government Board standard, there is immense waste. A fixed quantity of bread or other food is served out, regardless of the appetite of the inmate. In one workhouse I was told that every week no less than four and a-half hundred-weight of bread is thrown into the pig-tub, owing to the difficulty in obtaining authority to buy extra sugar and currants to make it into puddings. The bread might be served in properly-cut slices instead of in large unappetizing hunks, and the tea might be freshly brewed instead of being stewed for hours. The food supplied to inmates varies considerably in quality as well as quantity, and, though it is becoming more customary for the bread to be made in a bakery in the workhouse, the bulk of the articles of food is supplied by tradesmen who have entered into contracts with the Guardians.

This contract system is thoroughly bad. It may save the Guardians trouble, but it is extravagant, and leaves many loopholes for corruption and fraud. The comparison of the articles supplied with the standard fixed in the contract is not properly made, and when the officials are corrupt the inmates and the ratepayers suffer in order to put a larger profit into the pockets of the tradesman. The Guardians ought to avoid the contractor wherever possible, by purchasing the various articles of food through a buyer of their own, who could go to the wholesale dealers and the markets, and thus save the profits of the middleman. The material for the clothes should be bought in the same way and made up in the workhouse by the female inmates. The bootmaking might also be done inside the house. Thus, at one and the same time, the paupers would be saved from bad food and shoddy clothes, and would have useful, instead of useless, employment; and the ratepayers' pockets would be protected. If the contractor be not abolished, at least every precaution should be taken to prevent fraud by having a regular comparison of the articles supplied with the samples annexed to the tenders, and by making the contracts run for short periods. A recent independent valuation of the goods supplied to one large Union under contract, showed that the prices charged were never less than double, and were sometimes as much as eight times the actual market value of the articles supplied.

I am convinced that the only way of ensuring the humanizing of the workhouse is the organization of proper inspection and supervision. The Master and Matron are almost always chosen from

amongst men and women who have been bred in the atmosphere of Poor Law administration, *e.g.*, Relieving Officers. Indeed the system of hereditary succession often prevails as in the case of the French executioner under the old *régime*. It is by no means an uncommon thing, therefore, to find them devoid of sympathy for, and constitutionally prejudiced against paupers. The Guardians' Visiting Committee has regular days and fixed hours for its inspection, which is consequently quite inefficient. A casual perusal of Articles 148 and 149 of the General Order would, however, lead one to suppose that, even without surprise visits, no irregularity could possibly fail to be detected. The Committee has to examine the workhouse and all the stores, inspect the reports of the Chaplain and Medical Officer, afford opportunities for the inmates to make any complaints and at once investigate them. A series of questions has to be answered in writing and the book containing the answers is submitted to the Board at its ordinary meetings. These questions refer to the general state of the workhouse, the cleanliness and ventilation of the wards, the condition of the beds and bedding, the supply of clean and sufficient clothes, the proper classification and employment of the inmates, the instruction and training of the children, the attendance of the Medical Officer and the efficiency of the Nurses, and the dietary and proper serving of meals, etc. Casual visits of individual Guardians are often resented, and cannot, I believe, be insisted upon against the desire of the Board and the workhouse officers. No ratepayer, even, can visit the workhouse as of right. There is a staff of official inspectors, appointed by the Local Government Board, but as they only number eighteen, and have other duties besides the inspection of the workhouses in England and Wales they cannot be relied upon to make any very thorough investigation. The number of inspectors should be largely increased and should include women and working men. Provision should also be made for holding independent enquiries into irregularities which should have been brought to light by the official inspection of the Workhouse. At present it is customary for the inspector to hold the enquiry in cases in which his own conduct as an inspector may be brought into question.

There is abundant evidence to show that the election of women as Guardians has been the cause of a complete revolution in many workhouses, especially in the clothing of the inmates, the preparation and serving of the food, and many other points of domestic detail, which are outside the scope of the male imagination or are considered by the male intellect too trivial for attention. There are, besides, a host of things, both in the male and female wards, which women alone can inquire into and remedy. The use of footless socks and stockings in the Strand Union Workhouse would have remained undiscovered to this day but for the presence of a woman on the Board, and it was only the other day that it was found that the underclothing supplied to the female inmates of another London workhouse, and this in one of the best, was deficient in a necessary garment, and that night-dresses were considered a superfluity. Even now it is the exception and not the rule to provide pocket-handkerchiefs. Every Board of

Guardians should contain two or three women ; one is not enough. But women, alas ! can be as hard-hearted and callous as men, so that the necessity of discrimination in the choice of members is not limited to one sex ; but it is nevertheless true that if the people want an efficient administration of the workhouse, they cannot possibly secure it without the election of a sufficient number of women members.

The duties of all Guardians, and especially of those in rural districts, are multifarious. The administration of the Poor Laws is but one amongst the functions imposed on them by various Acts of Parliament. The recent suggestion of the Local Government Board, that a committee of women chosen from outside the members of the Boards, should be appointed to visit the female wards, has not been adopted with anything like universality. It has in many cases been indignantly resented, and in others only accepted with great reluctance. The Local Government Board should make the appointment of this committee compulsory, and should extend its investigating powers to all parts of the workhouse. It is no easy task for a Guardian to perform his Poor Law duties properly in the most favourable circumstances ; and even if the number of members on every Board were increased, and provision were made, not for payment of members, but for compensation for loss of time in the case of working men and women, there would still be room for this outside committee to do useful work.

The adult able-bodied inmates on the 1st January, 1893, were 18,226 men and 16,526 women. Of the men 10,203 and of the women 7,972 were temporarily disabled. It is provided that every able-bodied inmate shall be set to work according to his capacity for ten hours daily from March 25 to September 29, and for nine hours a day during the rest of the year, and no compensation is allowed. The work is not to be of such a kind as to interfere with " independent labourers," and if the product of workhouse labour is sold " the full market value must be demanded." It is becoming customary, especially in London workhouses, for the bread, clothing, boots, etc., to be made on the premises by the inmates. They also in some cases do the carpentering work, and, in one instance grow a large quantity of the vegetables consumed in the house. The able-bodied dietary is invariably made more meagre than that of the other inmates. The deserving inmates, that is those who are genuinely desirous of obtaining employment, should be given the amplest opportunity of going out for the purpose of looking for it. It would be an altogether new experiment, although not beyond the wit of man, to work out, on safe lines, a system that would allow the deserving to earn something by their work in the house in order that, like discharged prisoners, they may have a better chance of starting again in life. As things are, the longer a person is in the workhouse, the more difficult is it for him to return to a self-supporting life. Once a pauper, always a pauper is the general destiny.

The persistent idler who goes into the house should not be made the subject of any false sentiment. He should be made to do sufficient work not only to pay for his own board and lodging, but also to make residence in the workhouse more undesirable than honest work outside

OUT-DOOR RELIEF.

The influence of the Local Government Board has always been directed towards the abolition of out-door relief, but with some three or four exceptions, out of 648 unions, the Boards of Guardians have not bowed to the official pressure, and have been supported in their resistance by the general public opinion. When we analyze the statistics, we see that public opinion is right, for nearly one half of the adult recipients of out-door relief consists of the aged, the sick, and widows. But then this question forces itself upon us: are all the remainder undeserving, and, if not, can the deserving amongst them be best assisted outside or inside the workhouse? The number of able-bodied persons relieved on the 1st January, 1893, in England and Wales was 34,210 men, and 72,968 women, and of these 15,984 men and 56,442 women were recipients of out-door relief. As many as 13,033 of the men were relieved on account of sudden or urgent necessity, sickness, accident, or infirmity of their own or of a member of their family, or for funeral expenses, of the women 37,124 were widows, 12,588 were wives of able-bodied men, and the remainder were made up of single women, mothers of illegitimate children, wives with husbands in gaol, wives of soldiers, sailors, etc.

No sane man would risk the recurrence of the evils that existed under the old Poor Law; but it does not follow that the fears of officials and doctrinaire economists would be realized by a rational relaxation of the existing regulations for the administration of out-door relief. It is easy to say that no able-bodied person should be relieved outside the workhouse, and Guardians would be saved much trouble if they could get rid of out-door relief. But I would suggest that making things easy for the Guardians and officials should not be our first object. As things are, no person can claim relief from the rates unless he be in a state of actual destitution; his last penny must be expended before he can be assisted outside the workhouse. But prevention of destitution by timely and judicious help would often be more humane and more economical than standing aside until every stick and rag in a home has been sold, and then coming forward with the offer of the workhouse. A time limit would, of course, have to be fixed to suit each case. No able-bodied person, whose poverty can be proved to be directly due to drunkenness, wilful improvidence, or to crime, should be given out-door relief. The habitual drunkard, the persistent idler, the professional beggar, and the incorrigible vagrant, should be dealt with under other Acts of Parliament. If Relieving Officers and Guardians did their duty by carefully investigating every case, many homes might be kept together and families saved from pauperism by the allowance of temporary out-door relief during a critical period of the family life. And it ought not to be illegal to assist a man to obtain work by getting his tools out of pawn. We think it more serious to imprison or hang an innocent man than let half-a-dozen thieves and murderers go scot-free, and it seems to me a less evil to give help in a few undeserving cases than to plunge whole families unnecessarily into the abyss of pauperism.

The election of working-men as Guardians will be the greatest possible deterrent to applications from impostors, and ought also to ensure that the examination of applicants by the board shall be conducted with humanity, if not with sympathy. The average Guardian is prejudiced against the poor, thinking that

“the poor in a loomp is bad,”

and is sometimes so concerned with his own dignity as to consider the provision of a chair, so that a sick woman may sit down whilst under cross-examination, “derogatory to the board.” He has one stock question for the male applicant, “Do you belong to a trades-union?” If the reply be in the affirmative, the retort is, “Go to your union and get relief”; but if it be in the negative, the applicant is surlily reminded, “If you won’t help yourself, you won’t get any help from us.”

Many Guardians have neither the will, nor in some cases the time, to make the personal enquiries in out-door relief cases, that ought to be made if the relief is to be wisely and adequately given, and consequently the Relieving Officers have almost absolute power. I suspect that the practice of giving relief by means of tickets to be presented at the shops of local tradesmen is not much affected by the extremely mild Instructional Letter issued in 1868, but that it is a very widespread irregularity, by no means confined to the South London Union in which its exposure recently resulted in the resignation of a Guardian and two officials. The poor must be protected from having inferior articles foisted upon them at extortionate prices. The payment of the weekly allowance is most probably made in many unions through a middle-man who exacts a toll from the recipient. In one recent case this toll amounted to 2d. and sometimes 3d. out of each 2s. 6d. Laxity of supervision on the part of the Guardians is at the root of evils of this kind, and can only be avoided by the vigilance of individual members. An outside committee could give valuable assistance in checking the distribution of relief.

As things are now, even with greater discrimination on the part of the Guardians, there will still be a large number of cases which cannot be satisfactorily dealt with. There are many who have no prospect of finding permanent work, and want more than temporary assistance. The first thing to be done is to separate the willing worker from the deliberate idler, and the temporarily unemployed from those who have been described as “the industrial sediment which lies below the real body of self-supporting labour, and is unemployed because it is entirely or nearly economically worthless.” The “Unemployed” problem is not one which can be solved by a reformed Poor Law. It goes too deep down into the basis of our industrial system to be so easily settled. Until all those who are out of work are enabled to obtain remunerative employment, a considerable proportion will come for relief to the Guardians. The relief given should be, as far as practicable, non-pauperizing, and to this end there ought to be the fullest co-operation of Boards of Guardians with charitable institutions and such organizations as the Salvation and Church Armies and the Charity Organization Society, as well as with Vestries, Town Councils,

and other local bodies, for the purpose of carrying out the suggestions made in the Local Government Board's circulars and letters for putting the flotsam and jetsam of our industrial system to some work of public necessity. As an old preacher observed three centuries ago, "kept they must be; better keep them working, than begging or wandering."

THE CASUAL.

Admission to the Casual Ward is obtainable by an order signed by the Relieving Officer or his assistant or by an Overseer, or without order by application to the Master of the Workhouse or the Superintendent of the ward. In return for food and shelter for one night the casual has to perform a task, which, in the case of men, consists of breaking from one and a-half to four hundred-weight of stones, or picking one pound of unbeaten or two of beaten oakum, without any artificial aid, or three hours' digging, pumping, cutting wood, or grinding corn: for women the alternative is picking half-a-pound of unbeaten or one pound of beaten oakum, or three hours' washing, scrubbing, or cleaning. In return for the second night's accommodation the task is increased to breaking not less than five, and not more than thirteen hundred-weight of stones, picking five or eight pounds of oakum, or nine hours' digging, etc., for the men; and to picking two or four pounds of oakum or nine hours' washing, etc., for the women. The food provided is of the most meagre description, 6 oz. bread and one pint of gruel or broth for supper and breakfast for the men, and 6 oz. of bread or one pint of gruel or broth for the women.

The provision made for casuals is the most unsatisfactory part of our Poor Law system. It has encouraged, if not created, a class of habitual and semi-contented vagrants to whom the allotted task is comparatively easy, whilst to the deserving man or woman, in search of work, it is a cruel infliction. To the habitual casual the ward is a conveniently situated and cheap hotel, to which he can repair once a month; and his going and coming are so scientifically arranged that his return to a particular parish can be calculated to a day. The casual ward should be abolished, and every habitual vagrant should, as Ruskin suggested in 1862, "be set, under compulsion of the strictest nature, to the more painful and degrading forms of necessary toil," until he shall "come to sounder mind respecting the laws of employment." For the genuine tramp in search of work there is nothing to be suggested at present but provision of food and lodging in the workhouse, and help on his journey by means of a ticket entitling him to food at fixed stations along the route specified thereon. This system has been in force in many counties with varying success. In Gloucestershire ten years' operation has resulted in a reduction of sixty-six per cent. in the number of tramps.

CONCLUSION.

In the foregoing pages I have attempted to lay down the lines upon which the Poor Law should be reformed and have pointed out some of the changes which are possible under the existing law. By

a stroke of the pen, as it were, the administration of the workhouse might be reformed, the general order of 1847 might be revised in the light of modern knowledge and ideas, the work of inspection and supervision might be re-organized and rendered more efficient, the out-relief system might be humanized, and the treatment of the children put on a satisfactory basis. But there is much that cannot be done without legislative sanction. Our politicians and statesmen will not set themselves to the task of Poor Law Reform unless it is forced on them from the outside by the general body of voters on whose support their position in Parliament depends. It is for the mass of the electors to impress on the legislature that the only satisfactory reform of the law will be that which is directed towards the abolition of the workhouse and the elimination of pauperism. The present Poor Law was the outcome of middle-class ideas and has been administered by men who have been too often accustomed to look upon poverty as a crime. The harsh and unsympathetic treatment of the poor will continue as long as the rich and employing classes have the administration of a law made by their own class, entirely in their hands. The practice of compelling children, no matter how poor their condition, to give a weekly contribution towards the support of their parents, whilst the latter are in receipt of relief, is a good example of the evils of class administration. But the Local Government Act of 1894 gives the power to the people. The property qualification, plural voting, and ex-officio Guardians have been abolished. The hope of a humane administration of the law now depends on the creation of an enlightened public opinion that will sweep away from Boards of Guardians the gentlemen of no occupation, and the retired publicans, who, up to the present, have so often been elected by the plural voters to protect the rates and grind the poor. The working-classes, four-fifths of the people, can elect their own fellows, and make their will felt. The great needs now are the fullest publicity of the proceedings of all Boards, and greater uniformity of administration. This can only be obtained in London by the establishment of a directly elected Central Poor Law Council and the equalization of the Poor Rate in all the parishes. The latter reform is also required in many other large towns. Then, and not till then, will the rich parishes, which have rid themselves of their burden by demolishing the dwellings of the poor, be made to pay in proportion to their rateable value.

The expense of relieving the poor is part of the ransom that Property has to pay to Labour; and it is a ransom which is not begged as a charity but demanded as an instalment of justice. When those who live all their lives on the verge of poverty (one in twelve of the manual labour class is a pauper), with the vision of the workhouse always before their eyes, have a greater share in making and administering the laws, we shall recognize that Poverty must be blotted out of our criminal code, and Idleness, whether of rich or poor, treated not so much as a crime as a disease. The abolition of pauperism may be to-day a fantastic dream. But the dreams of to-day will be the facts of to-morrow.

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