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PAUPERISM AND THE POOR LAWS: sent

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A LETTER

TO

E. H. J. CRAWFORD, Esq., M.P. FOR THE AYR BURGHS,

CHAIRMAN OF SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE SCOTCH POOR LAWS,

BY

COUNCILLOR DUGALD CAMPBELL, GREENOCK,

CONTAINING

SOME OBSERVATIONS AS TO THE BEARING OF THE EXISTING
LAND LAWS AND LICENSE LAWS

ON THE

AMOUNT OF PAUPERISM,

AND

SOME SUGGESTIONS AS TO MODES OF RELIEF AND RATING, &c.

GREENOCK :

ORR, POLLOCK AND COMPANY.

1869.

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29 CATHCART STREET, GREENOCK,
August 31st, 1869.

E. H. J. CRAWFORD, ESQ., M.P.

Dear Sir,—

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The pauperism of the country so deeply affects all classes that I need scarce apologise for addressing the Chairman of a Select Committee of Inquiry on the subject. The proportions to which it has attained are far beyond what they ought to be, and any enquiry which will result in reducing its amount or mitigating its causes will be a boon to both paupers and ratepayers.

To ascertain these causes is, therefore, of primary importance; and, having in my business of factor, pretty extensive opportunities of observation, I take the liberty of drawing your attention—though it should prove but a mere reiteration of facts already before you—to some which have a not inconsiderable bearing on the amount of existing pauperism.

One of the most obvious in this quarter arises from the unsatisfactory condition of the agricultural population of Ireland, who, being deforced from the land, are driven by necessity to seek employment in this and other manufacturing towns, thereby throwing a large surplus of unskilled labour into the market, reducing its price, and bringing the whole labouring class a shade nearer pauperism—so near, indeed, that a few days of idleness from severity of weather make many of them and their dependents the objects of the benevolence of charitable societies, or of casual relief from the Parochial Board.

The effects of
eviction of
Irish tenantry
felt in
Scotland.

In the reduc-
tion of wages.

On coming across, often with large families, the Irish poor are compelled to seek houses of the lowest rents, and it is no uncommon thing to find eight or nine individuals occupying apartments suitable at most for two or three, and this in the worst localities, amidst a dissipated and degraded population, whose vices they rapidly imitate.

In the Connaught Close here, which is under my charge, there are twenty-seven families consisting of about a hundred-and-forty individuals—and this number is largely increased by lodgers—in a space 40 × 110, and this is by no means the worst case. What the *Pall Mall Gazette* stated the other day regarding Glasgow, is, unfortunately, equally applicable to Greenock:—

In the over-
crowding of
dwellings in
large towns.

“The dwellings of the poor are execrable; nothing can be worse in the way of crowding, want of space, want of ventilation, want of decency, and want of everything “which tends to lift the poor, and especially their children, from the lowest depths of degraded pauperism.”

Dr Buchanan of London, the inspector appointed in 1865 by minute of Privy Council to inquire into the condition of Greenock, states in his report that—

"No less than 2,747 persons are living under conditions which would not be permitted in the worst parts of London; and, in the instances at the top of the table (referring to a table in his report), a condition of matters is disclosed to which there can be but few parallels, and which represent people living day and night in a space about the size of a street cab apiece."

Although since then there has been an increase of house accommodation, it has scarcely touched the condition of this class at all. The restrictions as to description of buildings, and the cost of land, which is very dear, putting it out of the power of contractors to build and let houses at rents which they can pay.

The returns laid before the Greenock Parochial Board bring out pretty plainly the preponderance of Irish pauperism. The number of new applications last year for relief from parties born in Ireland being 730 against 970 born in Scotland; and, as those born in Ireland—being 6,176—were only about one-seventh of the population at the last census, the proportion at the Scotch rate should only have been 165 while it was 730, or four and a half times that amount. The month of August just closed exhibits the same fact, as, out of 166 new applications, 71 were from parties born in Ireland. In the city parish, Edinburgh, out of 5,443 of every description relieved in 1868, 1,715 were natives of Ireland, while, taking their numbers at the last census as one-seventh of the population, the same as in Greenock (and that appears a high estimate for Edinburgh), it should only have been 777. Also, in Glasgow and other large towns in Scotland, the proportion to the home population is excessive, and even these high figures are under the mark if it be taken into account that the children born in Scotland of Irish parents—and perhaps no class in proportion to their numbers, from their many disadvantages, more largely recruit the poor-roll—are entered as Scotch, making the amount of Scotch pauperism higher, and Irish pauperism less than it really is.

The returns by the Registrar-General shew a large mortality where such overcrowding and huddling together takes place, as is necessitated by the packed condition of the buildings and their poverty. Thus, the average mortality in Greenock for 1868 was 34·1 per 1000, in Glasgow 31·1 per 1000, and in Edinburgh 27 per 1000, while the same returns gave the average of the rural districts, where such overcrowding does not exist, at only 16·3 per 1000 (the suburbs of the towns also shewing an equally low rate), the difference being far greater than can be accounted for by the ordinary incidence of town life; and even these high rates—being only the average, and including the suburbs, where the rate is low—are no criterion of the mortality in the densely-packed parts of the town, where the poor Irish most do congregate.

It is needless to blame the local authorities for this overcrowding, as, if they strictly enforced the Sanitary Acts, they would put thousands into the streets, and the remedy would be worse than the disease. Compulsory powers by the Corporation to acquire building ground at a low rate so as to get sufficient building space; and a rearrangement of agricultural holdings, so as to absorb part

In the preponderance of Irish pauperism.

In the increased mortality caused by overcrowding.

Compulsory powers to acquire land necessary to remedy overcrowding.

of the population, are necessary before the Acts can be enforced; and, seeing the Legislature have to a great extent created the evil by changes of tenure and making the possession of land a monopoly through the laws of primogeniture and entail, and Commons Enclosures Acts, they are fairly bound to grant such powers for that purpose.

Although the state of matters in Ireland is a chief source of the pauperism and high mortality which afflict us, it is not the only one. There are causes of the same nature at work in the Highlands which produce similar results, and this can to some extent be seen in the Greenock Parochial Board Returns already referred to, where, of the 523 applications made for relief by parties born in other parishes in Scotland, the great bulk were from Highland parishes. But the effects of the evictions begun more than a generation ago are most observable in the Highlands themselves, where, in many cases, they have induced a condition of chronic pauperism. Thus, along the northern shores of the Moray Firth we find a population who formerly occupied and cultivated the surrounding straths and glens eking out a precarious living by fishing, the uncertainty of which produces but a choice of evils,—if very successful one season, removing the checks and restraints of prudence and thrift on the increase of population, or, if unsuccessful, producing poverty which the locality cannot meet, and rendering whole districts recipients of the country's charity. Formerly, with their farm, which consisted of some acres of good land—their live stock and the fishing besides—it is consistent with reason to believe that they were better able to maintain themselves than now, when solely dependent on so precarious a trade. The natural result of this condition of things is felt in the high poor-rate which is necessary, being in some places from fifteen to twenty per cent. on the rental, and even then leaving a large amount of wretchedness unprovided for.

When surveying the estate of Lybster in Caithness last year for a client, I was surprised to find that the poor rates on a rental of £1635 were £326 (one-half payable by landlord and the other by tenant), or 20 per cent. on the rental, while the preceding year it was 25 per cent., and that leaving aside the exceptional circumstances which made it so high for these years, it could at no time be calculated at less than 15 per cent., and a bad fishing season might make it worse, while the prospects of getting the rent would be considerably lessened. This fact, which I reported to my client at the time, is fully borne out by the evidence of Mr Mackie of Wick.

The disturbance of economical arrangements by the dis-severance of the peasantry from the soil in both Ireland and Scotland is a considerable element in the production and cost of pauperism; and if it be the case, as I have no hesitation in saying it is, that there are tracts of land in both countries fit for cultivation which would absorb most beneficially a large proportion of the surplus labour now so injuriously distributed, it is surely within the

Evictions in Highlands also productive of pauperism.

High poor-rate in consequence

Employment of surplus labour in cultivation of soil would be beneficial.

compass of the legislature to adopt such beneficent measures as may bring about a right adjustment of matters.

The small farm system advocated by Mr Bright would appear to be a hopeful remedy. I do not speak of the details of the scheme, but of the effect which such a system would have, whether the farms were held in freehold or only in leasehold. It is objected, however, that the machinery now requisite for farm labour would be an obstacle to the existence of small farms; but those who say so forget that the small farmer is thoroughly alive to the beneficial effects of co-operation. I know a Highland district where, before the large sheep farm mania swept them away, there existed nine small farms with rents varying from £24 to £50, and certain additional small payments in kind, the stock on each averaging from 150 to 400 sheep, half-a-dozen milk cows, and a couple of horses, with arable land growing a sufficiency of corn for home consumption. They were always able to send a considerable amount of stock to market, besides having plenty and to spare for themselves; and almost invariably those sons not required for managing the farms became skilled tradesmen—weavers, shoemakers, or carpenters, or joined the army or navy, and few or none of them were unskilled labourers, when they went as they did without any other stimulus but the desire of bettering themselves to push their fortunes elsewhere; and, if sickness did overtake them at their employment, they were taken home or tended with care by their friends, instead of becoming a burden on the town ratepayers. A different state of things from that caused by the evictions, which have dispossessed the people off the land, without any other resource to provide for themselves and their children but that of becoming unskilled labourers or fishermen, whose frequent and often only resort in sickness is the Parochial Board. These small farmers, although knowing nothing of the theories of co-operation which fill whole volumes in the present day, yet co-operated in many ways, they did so to cut the corn and take their peat fuel from the hill, and to secure stock for breeding purposes, and no doubt they would be found to do so also with machinery. With increased knowledge of agriculture which could be further increased by the establishment of district agricultural schools, the small farm system could now be made more beneficial than at any former period, as the landlord would thereby have a guarantee that the soil would be handled in a way to improve rather than injure it. The change which displaced the small farms for the large one was made not because of increased rent by the new system, but because the steadings required renewal, and the obligations of the Superior under the altered tenure—which made his proprietorship absolute, and reduced the occupier, who previously might be considered in permanent occupancy (under certain stipulations of service and acknowledgments of lordship, the Superior being under similar obligations to the Crown), to the condition of a mere tenant at will—to rebuild and make the needful improvements was

Mr Bright's small farm scheme a hopeful remedy.

Necessity for machinery no obstacle.

Case of small farms in Highlands.

Small farmers accustomed to co-operate.

Increased knowledge of agriculture favourable to small farmers.

Change from small farms to large sheep farms partly caused by cost of steadings.

becoming generally recognised. Hitherto the steadings were built and the land brought into cultivation solely by the occupiers themselves, the superiors doing nothing whatever for them,—which made a wide distinction between their case and that of landlords of dwelling-houses in towns, who laid out large sums in providing the accommodation for which they received rents,—and these occupiers were still willing (failing the landlord) to rebuild, if encouraged to do so by receiving leases for two lives or 60 years, with a right to sell their improvements, if removing, to the landlord or the incoming tenant; and if equal facilities were given them to borrow as were given to landlords under the Drainage of Land Act, I have no doubt the erections would have been made with modern improvements. But although the altered tenure imposed the burden of these erections on the landlord—along with the increased benefits received in the shape of higher rents, and payment in coin instead of in kind—he was not willing to undertake it, neither was he willing to allow the tenant to do so, but preferred the large sheep farm or deer forest instead, which required almost no erections, and thus a happy and contented peasantry, the pride and strength of their country, were sent away, some to overcrowd our large towns, others to the sea shore, scarce a remove from high water mark, where they might eke out existence by fishing, and both to increase the pauperism of the country; while others again were sent to struggle for bare life in an inhospitable climate. A writer well qualified to express an opinion from his knowledge of the circumstances, who recently visited the British-American Colonies, thus writes:—

“It is questionable whether a farmer gains by removing 3000 miles from a rocky sea coast where the average temperature is 50°, to another equally rocky coast where the temperature is 41°. . . . If men will not fish and cannot farm” (the charge made against them to justify expatriation) “at home, why should they fish or farm better without help or instructions in a worse climate and a far wilder sea? The general feeling was one of strong regret for their old homes. . . . Philanthropists who benefit tenants by helping them over the sea, would require to study Dove’s isothermes and the effect of ice on climate.”

It is surely a miserable condition to which a great nation is reduced when, instead of preventing, it permits proceedings to take place which are not only unjust in themselves, but which entail wretchedness and poverty and involuntary emigration on its best subjects.

It may be here noticed that in the case of the nine small farms already referred to, the arable ground where sufficient corn was grown for the home consumption of the different families, has now returned to a state of nature, and is so overrun by rabbits and hares that it is scarcely fit to sustain more than a score or two of sheep.

Where the mistake at first originated was in the State’s refusal to recognise the Celtic tenure. Under it the occupier was no doubt merely a tenant at will; but that did not mean the chief’s will, but his own will—the unwritten bargain by which it was held, and the breach of conditions which implied forfeiture being

Steadings formerly erected by occupiers.

Tenants would erect their own steadings if leases granted for 60 years, and loans given for that purpose by the State on favourable terms.

The evictions caused by the introduction of the large sheep farms and deer forests injurious to both State and people.

Tendency of large sheep farms and game preserves to throw land out of cultivation

Celtic tenure binding though unwritten.

as well understood and recognised by every member of the clan as the best written contract of the present day. But the State was then, except in name, an oligarchy, and the prescriptive rights of those who occupied the land for a century or two—in fact, often longer than the chief, who was not unfrequently attainted for rebellion—were of little value in its eyes, and were summarily disposed of to the superior for the time being without their knowledge or consent.

Occupiers title as good as that of the chief.

Case of Ireland and Highlands analogous: alteration of tenure made without consent of occupiers.

The case of Ireland seems analogous to that of the Highlands, the alteration of the tenure being made in the same way by the connivance of the State, without acknowledging one of the parties—and that a most important party to the existing contract, which, though unwritten, was not the less binding in justice and equity,—viz., the occupier, who was the reclamer and cultivator of the soil, and the builder of the dwellings. Without being heard on his own behalf, he was deprived of his rights, and that simply because he was the weakest party; and now, when greater deference is paid to justice and equity—and they are believed, at least in Great Britain, to take precedence of the law of might—it seems but just to undo the mischief so far as it can be done by again granting facilities for the acquirement of small farms at moderate rents, even though the mode of doing it should jar with technical rules and preconceived notions of order.

No doubt a class of landlords have come into existence by purchase of estates, who are in no way responsible for the existing circumstances (although many of those who recently purchased, and that with the burden of these occupiers, have been the chief transgressors), but even they, in the necessity of the case, and exercising a true patriotism, might be willing to grant the necessary remedial facilities. But however the land may have been acquired, no landlord needs fear that the same measure will be meted out to him as was meted out to the poor occupiers, as no proposition has been made or is likely to be adopted which will deprive them of possession without fair and reasonable compensation—very different treatment indeed from that received by the occupiers, who were in many instances summarily evicted from the farms on which they had bestowed both pains and cares, without any compensation whatever.

A measure which will have the effect of inducing landlords to grant life-leases of small farms at moderate rents, or convert them into freeholds, the State granting facilities for borrowing at a long date to purchasers to make the repayment light, as under the Drainage of Land Act, would be an incalculable boon. It would stimulate the people to exertion to obtain them, and thereby raise their tone of character. It would be the means of reclaiming waste land and land thrown out of cultivation, and employ beneficially a large proportion of the surplus labour which now reduces the legitimate earnings of industry and ultimately swells the pauperism of our manufacturing towns and fishing villages.

Compulsory powers not to be exercised without granting reasonable compensation.

Measures for increasing number of small freehold or leasehold farms will be beneficial.

Interference by the State with the private management of property should rarely take place, and never rashly; but if the way it be managed produces results detrimental to the State or is opposed to public interests, there is no doubt it has the power to interfere so as to remedy the wrong or provide for the necessity *salus populi suprema est lex*. The compulsory powers to acquire lands granted to railways, the Cattle Plague Act which compelled the destruction of cattle in certain circumstances, the Nuisance Removal Acts, which shut up houses, and the Emancipation Act which abolished slavery, are examples of interference with prescriptive rights or prescriptive wrongs; and where the management of property entails agrarian murders and the cost of a large standing army in one part of the country, and pauperism and a perfect holocaust of human life in another, there is surely a *prima facie* case for State interference whether to compel the present holders to provide the remedy themselves, or, giving compensation, divest them and take the new arrangement into its own hands. It no doubt seems harsh to recommend such measures, but a violent disease requires a stringent remedy, and no wise State could any longer allow matters to continue as they are.

The evils from the present system sufficient to justify State interference.

To meet the compensation to be paid—if such compulsory powers were put in force—it would probably be necessary to raise a loan on the guarantee of the State, which, with the interest thereon, could ultimately be paid from the rents of the property to be assumed. A loan for carrying out measures whose effect would put an end to agrarianism and mitigate pauperism would be more beneficial than one raised to maintain the fiction called “balance of power,”—for which too much of the present national debt was incurred,—and would be extremely popular. Even though the working out of such financial arrangements might entail a slight loss on the exchequer as its direct issue, yet the profit to be gained indirectly by the reduction of the army and police force, and the increased comfort and contentment of the people, would far more than counterbalance the mere pecuniary loss.

A State loan necessary to provide compensation to landlords.

The surplus funds of the Irish Church might also be wisely appropriated to the same object; and, to those who have conscientious scruples about applying money once devoted to religious worship for such a purpose, I would say that the whole teaching of the Bible goes to shew that God loves righteousness more than tithes, and judgement or measures which will effect justice, more than worship. The prophet Amos says, chap v.:—

Surplus funds of Irish Church should be devoted to same object.

Verse 22. “Though ye offer me burnt offerings and your meat offerings, I will not accept them: neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts.

23. “Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs, for I will not hear the melody of thy viols.

24. “But let judgement run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream.”

The right settlement of a question fraught with so much difficulty will be a great blessing, and it is to be hoped it may be speedily and effectually accomplished.

Intemperance
the chief cause
of pauperism.

Another prolific source of pauperism is the prevailing intemperance of the country, and of this it may be said that, while other causes pauperise thousands, it demoralises, pauperises, and slays its tens of thousands. The statements made as to the evils which proceed from this source are often considered the mere exaggerations of teetotallers, but, from my knowledge of the circumstances of a large population, I must bear testimony to their truth, as over and over again I have seen comfortable and happy homes decimated and made miserable and poverty-stricken by this vice. That "the drunkard shall come to poverty" is a truth for all ages, and never more manifest than now, as the records of poorhouses and lunatic asylums fully shew. Many of those who ultimately find their way to the paupers' roll make their first appearance as "drunk and incapable," or "drunk and disorderly" at the police courts. The Greenock Police Returns for 1868 shew that, excluding minor offences such as failing to light a stair or laying down ashes, there were 2,417 criminal convictions, and of these, 1,517 on the lowest calculation were directly caused by drunkenness; and, in addition to these, there were 612 drunkards taken up who were afterwards allowed to go without being brought before the court: and this is but a sample of the numbers who are yearly qualifying themselves everywhere throughout the kingdom for the pauper roll, as it is calculated that for every one taken up by the police nine escape unnoticed.

The appendix to the Report on Intemperance, published in June of this year by the Convocation of Canterbury, gives the testimony of clergymen, governors of workhouses and prisons, and others having facility from their official positions of obtaining correct information, shewing the close connection between intemperance and pauperism. The evidence is brought out in the form of replies to a schedule of queries, and I subjoin a few extracts:—

Testimony and
returns from
governors of
workhouses
and others
proving this
fact.

No. 782 says:—I believe pauperism would be unknown here if it was not for drunkenness, and rates would be lowered.

788 says:—This Union has to support 80 pauper lunatics, at a cost of £20 per annum. About two-thirds of these cases have been traced to drink.

793:—Without hesitation, I should say that 70 or 80 per cent. of the paupers came to that state through drink.

797 says:—I do not know the proportion of inmates of the workhouse who have contracted habits of intemperance, but I am sure I am within the mark when I say nine-tenths of the adult paupers are habitual drinkers to excess, and the children are nearly all paupers in consequence of the dissipated habits of their parents.

817 says:—Present number of inmates 144—through drink, two-thirds.

829 says:—Knowing the greater portion of the inmates and their families as I do, I think, of the 237 inmates now in this house, that two-thirds are here by intemperance, directly or indirectly—that is to say, by their own intemperate habits or those of their friends.

849:—There are 76 men in this house, and, of these, 28 bear a good character for sobriety. The remaining 48 have been more or less the victims of intemperance.

858:—I have been able to glean from our inmates that about 80 per cent. of them have been the victims of intemperance.

875:—I have considered your enquiries in connection with our workhouse chaplain,

who has been in his office upwards of twenty years, and, from my own experience in a workhouse of more than thirty years, I consider that fully one-half of the adult inmates are there from their own intemperate habits, which appears as strong as ever if an opportunity offers. One-fourth consists of those connected with the intemperance of others, and one-fourth from other causes.

878:—Independent of lunatics, I have 29 men in this house, and all with the exception of 3 are thorough drunkards—of women I have 23. Three of these I may call idiotic,—one old woman of good character, the rest, drunkards and prostitutes. Three-fourths of the children are left to the care of the Union through the drunken and dissolute habits of their parents,

901:—From 31 years' experience in "Union" workhouses, I have observed that a large number of inmates and out-door recipients of relief are chargeable in consequence generally of the intemperance of the head of the family, viz., the father.

The great mass of these returns bring out vividly the truth stated long ago by Dr Chalmers that "the public-house is the most deleterious and by far the most abundant source of pauperism." Equally explicit testimony has been borne over and over again by Judges and others to the effect that intemperance is the main source of crime, and crime usually stands in close relationship to pauperism. Thus Sheriff Alison states—

"Upwards of two-thirds of the whole of the boys in the Glasgow House of Refuge have been precipitated into crime through the habits of intoxication of one or both of their parents."

Judge Coleridge states—

"There is scarcely a crime comes before me that is not, directly or indirectly, caused by strong drink."

Judge Gurney says—

"Every crime has its origin, more or less, in drunkenness."

Judge Alderson says—

"Drunkenness is the most fertile source of crime, and, if it could be removed, the assizes of the country would be rendered mere nullities."

Judge Paterson says—

"If it were not for this drinking, you (the jury) and I would have nothing to do."

Judge Wightman—

"I find in every calendar that comes before me one unfailing source, directly or indirectly, of most of the crimes that are committed—intemperance."

Lord Chief-Justice Sir W. Bovil writes on 23rd January, 1869—

"I have no hesitation in stating that, in the north of England, and in most of the large manufacturing towns and the manufacturing and mining districts, intemperance is, directly or indirectly, the cause of by far the largest proportion of the crimes that have come under my observation, and you have, I believe, in your published charge, correctly stated the views of the judges generally upon the subject."

"The cost to the country for the maintenance of the prisoners and their families likewise becomes a matter of very serious importance, and, looking also to the wholesale misery that is brought upon the working-classes by their indulging in intoxication—at first unfitting them for their ordinary occupations, and then rapidly causing disease and want—too frequently insanity or death—and bringing distress upon their families; and, considering the amount of pauperism as well as crime which is thus occasioned, it would seem to be the imperative duty, as well as the interest of the State, to endeavour to provide some remedy which will check so frightful an evil."

"It seems to me that the object of legislation should be to check the evil at its source, and to place all these houses under very stringent control, to prevent their encouraging drunkenness, and to make every case of intoxication the cause of immediate

Testimony of Judges and others shewing that intemperance is the chief source of crime.

forfeiture of a license; and, if the law were then strictly enforced against both publicans and drunkards, we might, I think, reasonably look for some considerable improvement."

The returns already referred to in the Report of Convocation exhibit a great mass of evidence on this subject, too long to quote here, but they will amply repay perusal. They are embraced in the replies to queries Nos. 557 to 778. Testimonies like these to the magnitude of the pauperish and crime which flow from this source are incontrovertible. Those who fall into this habit are not at the beginning worse than their neighbours (many of them are the most amiable), but, from the multiplication of public-houses, and very likely the solicitations of an acquaintance who may have a license, they are actually "led into temptation," and go on from bad to worse.

Every new licensed dealer adds to the number of drinkers, and they generally add to the number of paupers.

That the licensed dealer should be as diligent in his business as any other trader is only what can be expected, and every new person who enters the trade no doubt brings his influence to bear on a new set of customers. One lately begun said to me the other day very naively regarding a person solicited to become a customer—"He promised to make all his spendings in my shop, as I was an old acquaintance." If such is the practice of the trade, and I have no doubt about it, it is self-evident that the circle influenced by ten energetic spirit-dealers is much larger than that influenced by one; and, as a consequence, the customers who make the victims, who make the paupers, are also increased. In Liverpool they tried for a time the experiment of granting a license to all and sundry who applied, except the utterly disreputable, and found the drunkenness and crime increase so much that they were fain to retrace their steps to the old restrictive system.

The fact that the increase of licensed houses causes an increase of drunkenness, and that where they are diminished a decrease takes place, is fully evidenced by the replies to queries on this point in the Returns already referred to, from which I quote the following:

Testimonies of Police Superintendents and others proving that increased facilities for getting drink causes increased intemperance.

- 99.—"Intemperance has increased here with the number of beer-shops. The increase is owing, in this parish, to the fact of one public-house and two beer-shops having been opened since 1854."
- 223.—"Intemperance decreased greatly; but rather on the increase lately, owing to a new public-house."
- 224.—"Intemperance much increased lately, through the influence of a seductive and clever publican."
- 235.—"Intemperance had considerably decreased until the opening of three new public-houses."
- 247.—"When once a public-house is established, the proprietor moves heaven (?) and earth to make it pay; and, therefore, he becomes an active agent, and a most powerful one, in the increase of intemperance."
- 257.—"Undoubtedly the spread of intemperance increases with the number of public-houses or drinking-shops, which points necessarily to some very severe examination as to the wants of the neighbourhood requiring it before a public-house or drinking-shop is licensed."
- 723.—"I enclose a return, from which it will be seen that there is the least crime in the parishes in which public-houses are fewest."

1841-2.—“General Cartwright, the Inspector-General of Constabulary for the Central Division (which embraces 19 English and 6 Welsh counties, and the boroughs within them), gives in his report for last year a number of returns, from which I have made the following calculations, viz.:—

Groups of Counties and Boroughs having the following number of Public-houses, per 1000 of the population.	Number of persons proceeded against for drunkenness, per 1000 of the population.	Calculations from returns made up by Inspector of Constabulary for Central Division of England.
Under 6 Public and Beer-houses—per 1000 population, ...	2.73	per 1000.
„ 6 and under 8 „	4.03	„
„ 8 „ 10 „	4.05	„
„ 10 „ 12 „	8.53	„
„ 12 „ 14 „ (the greatest number)	12.61	„

Sheriff Alison, in his History of Europe, incidentally gives an example of the same truth. Writing of Sweden, he says—

“Brave, kind-hearted and hospitable, sincere in their devotion, enlightened when duly instructed in their intellects, gentle in their dispositions,—the Swedish peasantry exhibit as fine a specimen of rural civilization as is to be met with in the whole domains of the family of Japhet. But one fatal indulgence has wellnigh obliterated all these advantages, and let in upon this simple, kind-hearted people the whole catalogue of human sins. Drinking is universal. The liberty of distilling in every house, on paying a trifling duty to Government for the right to use a still, has from time immemorial been established among the whole peasantry of the country. . . . The consequences of this calamitous facility in producing and obtaining spirituous liquors have been to the last degree disastrous. Notwithstanding the small number of manufactures which are established in the country, the general simplicity of rural life, the absence of great towns, and the moderate size of its capital (which contains only eighty thousand inhabitants), the average amount of crime over all Sweden equals that of the most depraved cities of Great Britain.”

Experience of Sweden to the same effect.

Facts like these prove plainly that legislation, which has for its end the reduction of pauperism and crime, must begin by reducing the facilities for drunkenness, which the too numerous public-houses everywhere present.

Legislation which will reduce facilities for drunkenness will diminish pauperism.

It is said, however, that if the number of licensed houses be diminished, the number of shebeens or houses where illegal traffic is carried on will be increased; but this I believe to be a complete fallacy. Certain inquiries into the facts in Edinburgh showed that these houses acted as mere appendices to the public-house, where the more vicious resorted when it closed to quench their whetted appetites; and “that the more numerous the public-houses in any district, the more numerous were the ‘shebeens’ found to be.”

Shebeens not increased by diminishing public-houses.

Such places being tabooed by society, do not present the temptation to the general mass of the people which the luxurious gin palaces with their gorgeous fittings and attractions do; and to continue their present numbers which act so injuriously on such a pretext is the sheerest folly, as they are daily adding to the number of those who will ultimately resort to the shebeen. Besides, how should it be considered an impossibility to put down this illegal traffic. Captain Smart, Superintendent of the Glasgow Police, says in one of his reports—“The traffic in spirits in shebeens or unlicensed premises was nearly put an end to by the vigorous application of Forbes McKenzie’s Act. This satisfactory result was brought about by the magistrates, under the advice of the Town Clerk, having convicted on circumstantial evidence instead of as formerly making it imperative on the prosecutor to prove a sale in

Mere appendices to public-houses.

Illegal traffic can be put down.

each case." And if he could nearly put an end to this traffic in Glasgow, it may be put down as effectually in other places by the vigorous application of the same means. Certainly the trail left by it is sufficiently obvious to give favourable opportunity for this being done; and if the Excise were able, although the duty was 10s, to put down illicit distillation, surely a few effective police set apart for the purpose might manage to suppress it entirely, or so reduce it as to make it comparatively harmless.

Licensing
Boards should
be elected by
ratepayers.

Seeing that the license laws so largely affect the moral and social wellbeing of the people, and that the ratepayers have to pay so dearly in poor rates and prison rates for the traffic they legalize, it is not too much to ask that they should have a controlling power in carrying them out, as they know best what is required for their necessities, and could make arrangements in accordance therewith. To effect this I would suggest that a local board should be elected by the ratepayers who elect the Police Commissioners. They might consist of three, five, or seven, according to the size of the district. Their term of office to be triennial, and their decision to be final. The magistrates not to belong to the board *ex officio*, but to be eligible if elected. Such a board would attain a greater aptitude for administering such laws, and would enjoy the confidence of the people more than a board like the present, which is mainly elected for other purposes.

Salutary
restrictive leg-
islation not
opposed to
true liberty.

No doubt there will be an outcry made by interested parties against any measure which has a tendency to diminish the facilities for drunkenness, and the stereotyped poor man to be "robbed of his beer" by it will again crop up through the press, and otherwise to do battle in the cause of "liberty." This outcry made in the name of liberty against restrictions of a salutary kind is an utterly selfish one, and just means liberty to indulge one's own inclinations and propensities, whatever may be the consequences to others. It is an outcome of the old Cainish principle which denies the duties and responsibilities of brotherhood, and is utterly opposed to those Christian principles which teach us to deny self and do what in us lies to remove temptation and occasions to offend out of our brother's way. Wise and beneficent legislation in the spirit which should distinguish the nineteenth century of the *Christian* era will do much to increase the morality and decrease the pauperism and crime of the country, and it is to be hoped Government will not be deterred by the wail of a spurious liberalism from carrying out such a measure during the next session.

Duty of self-
denial for the
sake of others.

Mode of
administering
relief.

Out-door
system
calculated to
increase
pauperism.

Passing from the causes of pauperism to the mode of administering relief, it would appear to be the interest of the country that the out-door system should be restricted, if not altogether abolished, as it has, particularly in country parishes, the tendency to lower the character of the people and to increase rather than diminish pauperism; the fact that others are receiving relief who are apparently no worse off than themselves being apt to render even the industrious poor, who are struggling through life in an honourable

way, dissatisfied with their condition, and seek to receive the aid the others enjoy.

Mr Walker, the Secretary of the Board of Supervision, says in regard to this:—

“It is now a matter of trite observation that all poor-laws have an inherent tendency to foster pauperism, to increase the expenditure for the relief of the poor, and to deteriorate the character of the population among which the law is administered.”

It appears also to some extent to take away the checks and restraints of the natural law which so wisely makes poverty and want follow in the wake of improvidence and dissipation, the knowledge that if the worst come to the worst, the State has made a provision which keeps them and their families from want being liable to make the idle and dissolute less careful and diligent than they would otherwise be. It also acts prejudicially towards the poor themselves, its effect being to dam up the private channels of benevolence which otherwise would reach them. Nothing is more common than to hear the reply made to an applicant for relief: “I pay poor-rates—apply to the Parochial Board,” and this without the slightest inquiry into the circumstances, which must be disheartening to many who may be reluctant to go on the pauper-roll, and who, with a little help, might have tided over a pressing difficulty. Besides, mere officialism cannot be expected to take an equal interest in the poor and their families with those sympathising persons administering voluntary relief, who, in addition to bestowment of alms, stimulate and aid them to better their condition. The continual contact with mere officialism dissevers in a great measure the tie which should bind the classes together, and begets in the heart of the poor a feeling of sourness and dislike instead of love and respect towards those more favourably circumstanced than themselves.

Prejudicial to the poor.

Private benevolence more beneficial

The out-door poor can safely be divided into two classes, one of whom—the infirm and impotent—would be much better in the poorhouse, as they would there be better fed, better clothed, and better cared for than they are now; the other would be better off the roll altogether, as what they get is not only insufficient for their support, but tends to destroy the stimulus to bettering their condition. Of course I would deprecate any sudden change before the new relation in which the community would stand to the out-door poor was fairly understood and recognised, but, from my experience of the working of some associations for meeting the cases of certain of the poorer classes, I have no doubt it would be successful.

Present system should be changed, but not hastily.

There is an association in this town called the Charitable Society, composed of gentlemen of all denominations, by whom the poorer districts of the town have on several occasions been mapped out, and a house-to-house visitation made to enquire into their circumstances and assist the necessitous poor, the only qualification asked for in dispensing the relief being humanity and necessity. Agencies such as this would, I have no doubt, become permanent

Restriction of out-door relief would increase voluntary benevolence.

in every parish if this alteration was made, and be more beneficial than the existing system. Dr Chalmers says, speaking of the benefits of such a change—

“We count on such a result,—first, because we look for a resuscitation and increase of private charity as the sure effect of every abridgement in the legal or visible displays of it; and, secondly, because we look to the domestic capabilities of the people themselves, by which” wise distributors “would indefinitely raise the standard both of comfort and character through the community at large.”

Surely such a scheme is hopeful, and such results are worth a trial, and at a time when the severance of the rich and poor is so wide, and daily getting wider—the rich becoming richer and the poor poorer—it were well to cement the breach by bringing them into closer contact, calling out their mutual sympathies and enabling them to help and esteem each other. If no alteration is made, the members of the Board should divide the town or parish into districts and make regular personal visitations alternately, which would be more effective in itself and better appreciated by the poor than when done solely by an inspector or his assistants.

As to the mode of rating, I am of opinion that it should be levied on income as well as property. Under the present system many rich men who are lodgers escape the assessment altogether, or pay poor rates on perhaps a £100 a year of rental, while they pay income tax on thousands a year; and if the correct principle be that a man should support the poor according to his ability, and a tax put on by statute should at least be equal in its operation, the sooner it is changed the better. It appears somewhat anomalous that real property should bear the whole burden of the poor rate, although it may, as often happens, be bonded to the teeth. In the case of Lybster before referred to, the value of the property was £24,000, while the bonds over it were about £20,000; and although nearly all the rents went to pay for interest of bonds, yet the landlord was obliged to pay all the poor rates; and I am aware of many cases of a similar nature where, although the interests and feu-duties swallow up two-thirds of the rental, they don't pay a farthing of the poor rate. There does not appear to be any good reason whatever for exempting feu-duties or feu-rents from the local poor rate, and the sooner they are charged like other rents the better. But the case of bonds is somewhat different, as it would not do to saddle them with a local rate which varied in different localities, and which would in some instances, if the rate was high, act as a complete bar to the investment of money; while in others, from the lowness of the rate, it would cause a complete glut of money. It is not, however, without the limits of possibility to adjust a fixed rate which would be applicable to this class of securities and others of the same description while fluctuating, incomes derived from business might be charged on a properly regulated Means and Substance rate.

We still levy in Greenock under such a rate, and consider it the most just, although, owing to the want of any check on the

If present system continued, members of Board should make regular personal visitations to paupers.

Mode of rating.

Feu-duties should be chargeable.

Bonds should be chargeable, but not with local rate.

amount of the chargeable means except the haphazard opinions of an assessment committee, there is occasional grumbling about its inequality, which is no doubt to some extent justifiable; for while the incomes of civil servants and those with fixed salaries may be correctly estimated, that of others can only be guessed at, and that is thought to be done at times rather wide of the mark. Thus public rumour has it that three firms in town pay income tax on £18,000, £10,000, and £8,000 per annum, while the amount on which they are charged for poor rates is or was lately only £3,500, £2,500, and £2,000 respectively, which, if it be so, is somewhat hard on those who pay close up to the amount of their incomes. These anomalies, however, could be corrected by making the local assessor for income tax, who has statutory powers for getting the returns of incomes, the assessor also for the poor rate, of course under the control of the board.

Incomes, or means and substance, should be chargeable.

The present law of settlement, if such a law is to be maintained at all, is as good as any that could be adopted; but it should be made the same for the whole kingdom, as to allow English and Irish paupers to obtain a settlement in Scotland after five years' continuous residence, and not allow Scotch paupers the same privilege in those countries, is unjust and unreasonable. If, however, the land question in Ireland is to continue unsettled, and Scotland is to be flooded in consequence by Irish pauperism, there is no help for it but to return to a birth-settlement, and make Ireland provide for the Irish poor, which may help to bring landlords to their senses who now improve the tenants off the land to the grievous burden and injury of Scotch and English ratepayers. The population of Ireland to that of Scotland is as five to three in round numbers, and yet the expenditure for the poor-law relief is greatest in Scotland. Ireland, with a population of 5,798,967 at the last census, costing only £611,891 11s in 1866, while Scotland, with a population of 3,062,294 cost £807,631 5s 6½d—a large proportion of which was for Irish paupers,—while Ireland paid nothing for Scotch paupers except an occasional steamboat fare.

Law of settlement.

Comparative cost of Scotch and Irish pauperism.

The area of chargeability should in most cases be enlarged. At present a large proportion of the farm labourers not being able to get residences in the rural parishes, are obliged to come into towns; and when death or incapacity for work ensues from the fevers and rheumatisms incident to field work, they are thrown on the poor roll; and it would be but justice to increase the area, so as to include the landward parishes and make them pay their fair share of the burden.

Area of chargeability.

The Committee of Management of Parochial Boards should be elected by the ratepayers, and the owners of real property should not have greater privileges than tenants or other ratepayers; and if the Board is thus popularised, all appeal may be dispensed with, as the interests of the poor would be perfectly safe in their hands.

Election of Committee of Management.

It would be well, too, that the lists of parties to be proposed as members of the board should be published at least a week before

the day of election, so that the ratepayers may judge of their qualifications for the duties, and vote accordingly.

Established Church should not be represented *ex officio* at Parochial Board.

The right of ministers or other members of the kirk-sessions of the Established Church to sit at the Board *ex officio* should be disallowed—it is the occasion of much bickering and jealousy—as that church now represents considerably less than a moiety of the people of Scotland, and, in some parishes, only a mere fraction of the inhabitants. Dr Macleod, in his closing address as moderator of last General Assembly, fairly admitted this, in regard to the Highland parishes, he said—

“Unfortunately, too, our numerical weakness in the Highlands of Scotland—but there only supply a weapon of attack,—our numerical inferiority there proceeds from various causes which I need not specify—many of them local, but generating an opposition which, in its unreasonable and superstitious fanaticism, finds perhaps no parallel except in ultramontane Romanism.”

What is here admitted by the reverend doctor tells against the continuance of the invidious distinction in favour of his Church. His explanation of the reasons for the fact bears so much of the character of the fox's reasons for leaving the grapes after his repeated failures to get at them, that they require to be received with rather a considerable grain of salt.

Dr McLachlan of Edinburgh, Convener of the Highland Committee of the Free Church, bears a similar testimony in regard to the weakness of the Establishment. He said—

Weakness of Establishment in Highlands.

“Applying Mr Gladstone's principle by which the maintenance of an Establishment is to be regulated, that where there is a mere handful of people in a parish connected with that Establishment there is no ground upon which its existence can fairly be defended, I cannot see how the existence of an Established Church can be justified in the Scottish Highlands any more than in Kerry or Tipperary: in many cases the comparison could shew in favour of Ireland. It is often said these facts are not known; well, if not, they should be known. The Establishment in the Scottish Highlands is, in most places, a mere shadow, and it cannot in any fairness be defended.”

Such is the testimony of men having a knowledge of the circumstances, and it shews that the reason for granting the privilege is gone, and it should, therefore, be withdrawn.

I now conclude, in the hope that the facts and suggestions herein stated may help to stir up the public mind to take an interest in a subject fraught with such importance to the wellbeing of the country as the increase or diminution of pauperism, and, if they are privileged to accomplish this in any degree, I shall be abundantly satisfied, as there will then be a prospect of remedial measures being adopted.

I am, yours faithfully,

D. CAMPBELL.

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