

AN
ADDRESS
TO THE
LANDED INTEREST,
ON THE DEFICIENCY OF
HABITATIONS AND FUEL,
FOR THE USE OF
THE POOR.

BY
WM. MORTON PITT, ESQ. M. P.

LONDON :

PRINTED FOR ELMSLY AND BREMNER,
STRAND.

1797.

TO THE SOCIETY
FOR BETTERING THE CONDITION, AND INCREASE-
ING THE COMFORTS OF THE POOR

This Tract is respectfully inscribed by their
most obedient, humble servant,

W. M. PITT.

Aug. 29th, 1797.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR ELLIS AND BARNES,

STAND

1797.

INTRODUCTION.

IT is to the gentlemen of landed property, that the whole body of agricultural Poor look for protection, as well as for employment. Attention to the wants of the Poor is, without doubt, an essential part of the duty of those who possess property, and that duty is generally performed in this kingdom in a very exemplary manner. But the system is still imperfect ; misery yet prevails : to eradicate it wholly is next to impossible, but it may in a great measure be alleviated. If the following pages, which take notice of some peculiar kinds of distress, and which endeavour to point out a practicable remedy, should in any degree contribute to the attainment of that object, I shall be highly gratified. To the LANDED

INTEREST, therefore, I presume to address myself.

Some may be of opinion, that the cottages here recommended are too spacious for common labourers, and that such persons have no occasion for cow-stalls or pig-houses, nor for a pantry, and so many bed-chambers. With regard to the former, these cottages are calculated for labourers in that improved state in which it is the interest of every land-owner to place them, and which is perfectly consistent with their station, each possessing at least a large garden, some also pasture for a cow ; and as to the latter, comfort and decency require the number of rooms proposed. If such cottages can be built for so small a sum, as that the labourer can afford to pay in rent the interest of the money expended, it can never be urged as an objection, that their habitations are too comfortable.

Lime-whiting cottages, both within and

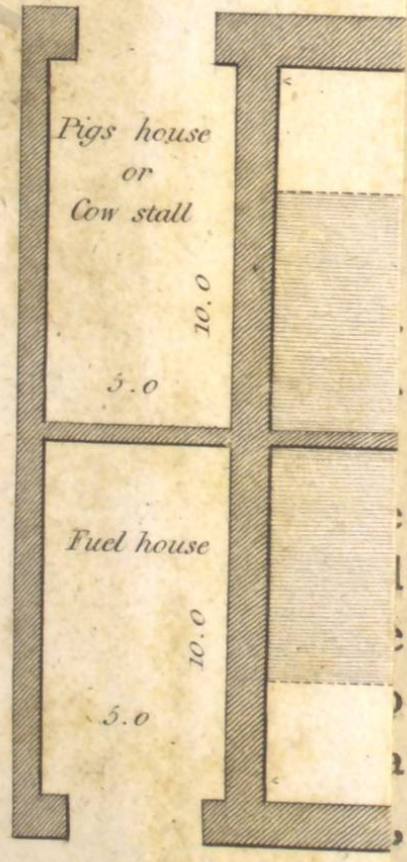
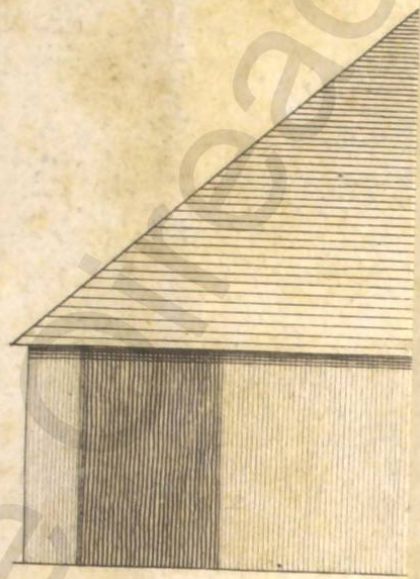
INTRODUCTION.

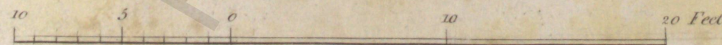
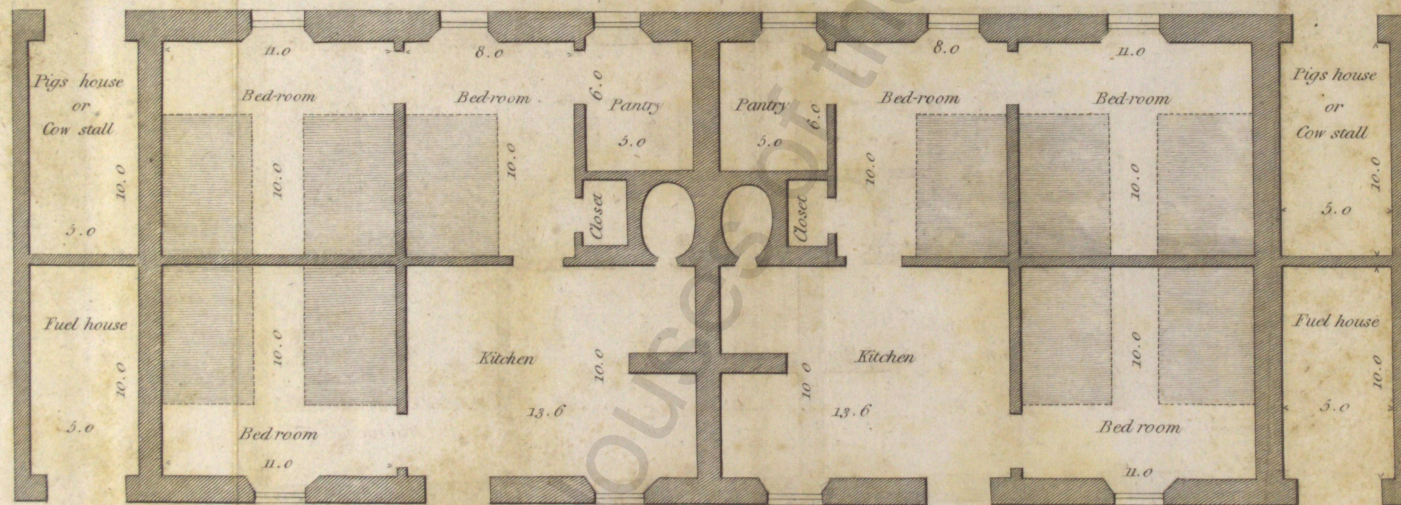
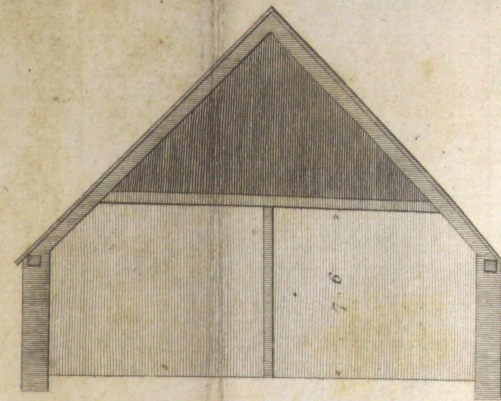
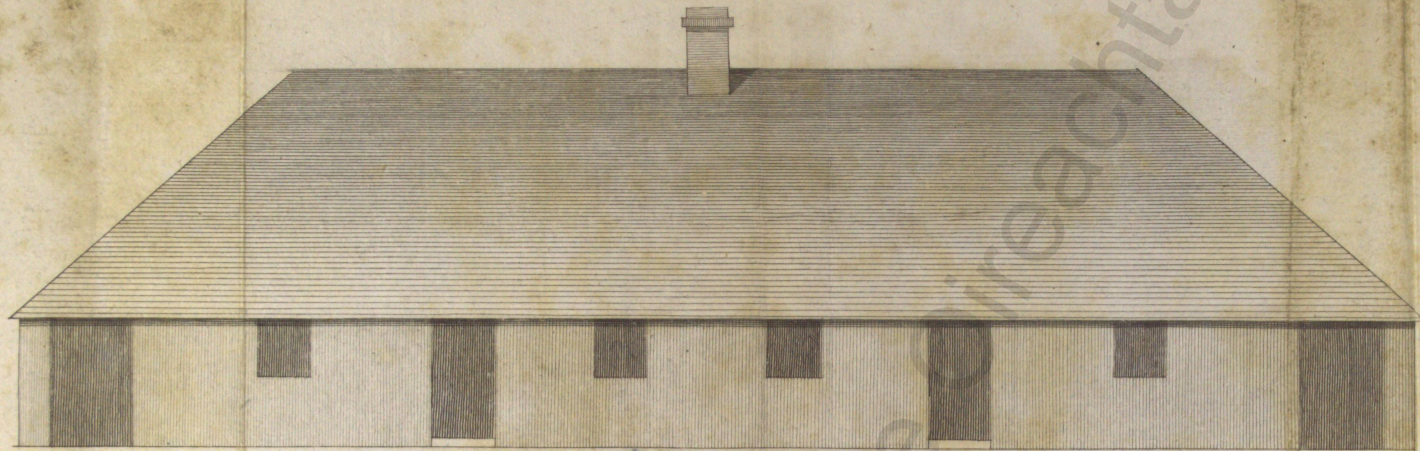
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without, is earnestly recommended by Mr. Howard in his book on Lazarettos, not only as being very conducive to health, but, by producing a cheerful and decent appearance, operating also as an encouragement to the occupiers to keep their houses neat and in good order, and having a salutary influence on their moral character.

It is earnestly recommended by Mr. Howells, the book on Taxation, not only as being very conducive to health, but by reflecting a cheerful and decent appearance, occupying a large and important place in the good order, and having a salutary influence on the moral character.

The book is written in a simple and unassuming style, and is so arranged as to be easily understood by all classes of readers. It is a valuable work, and one which every person should possess. It is a book which will do much good, and which will be read with interest and pleasure by all who are concerned in the subject.





REFERENCE TO THE PLATES.

No. I. A single cottage, containing a kitchen, three bed rooms, and a pantry ; the whole on the ground floor. The fuel house, and pig's house, or cow-stall, may either be detached buildings in the garden, or may be added at the two extremities of the cottage. The advantage expected from this plan, is from the saving of timber for floors and stairs, which it is supposed will more than counterbalance a greater length of side walls and roof ; especially as such low walls require little thickness.

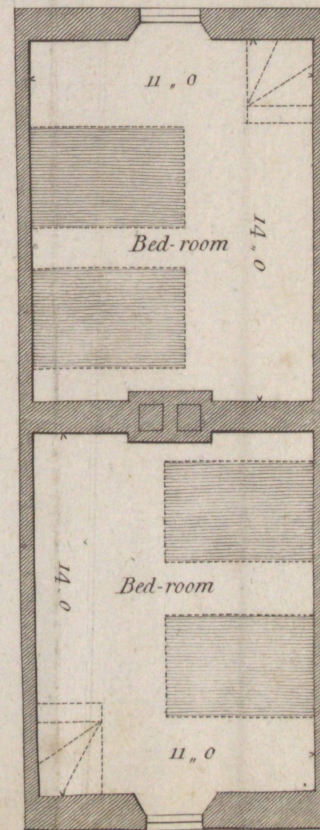
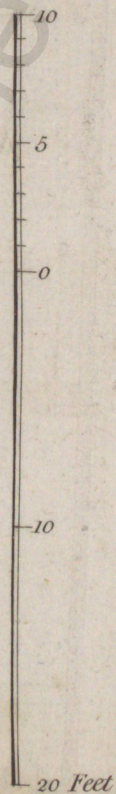
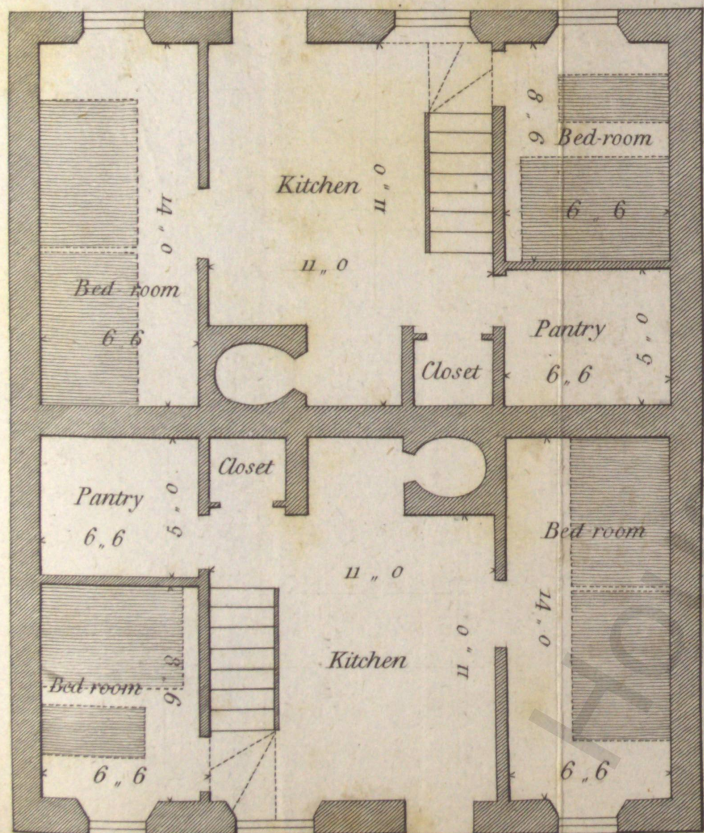
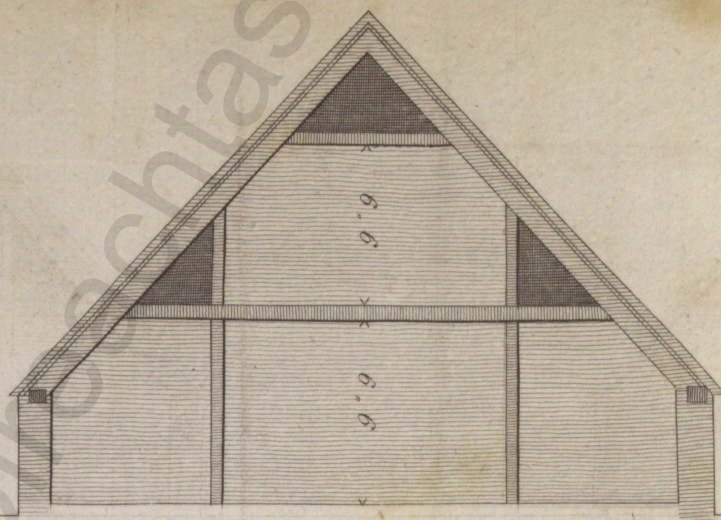
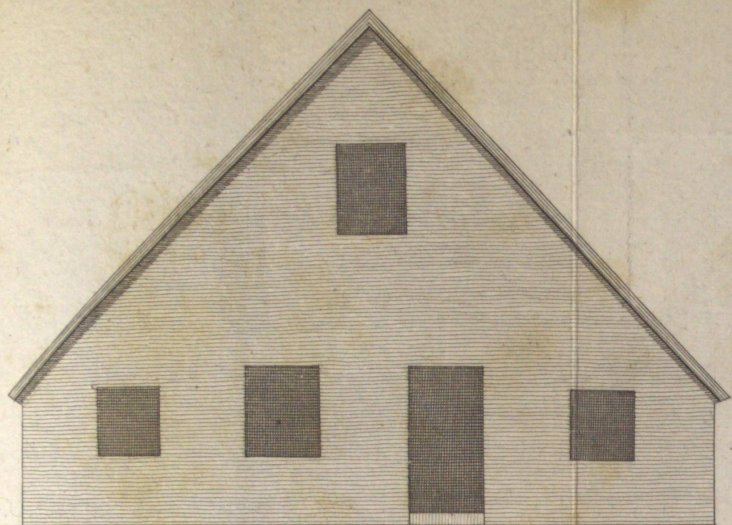
No. II. Two cottages built together, with the transverse centre wall, common to both, and the longitudinal division, a partition of the thickness of half a brick, and carried up no higher than the ceiling joists, to which it is a support. Each cottage contains a kitchen, three bed rooms, and a pantry ; the whole on the ground floor. The fuel house, cow-stall, or pig's house, may here also be added at the

REFERENCE TO THE PLATES.

extremities of the building. The supposed advantage in this case, is to arise from the saving of timber for floors and stairs; the increase of the roof to be compensated by the wall between the two houses being common to both, and the side walls of less extent.

No. III. Two cottages, built together, but back to back; the side walls five feet high, and the kitchen divided from the side rooms by partitions. Each cottage contains on the ground floor, a kitchen, pantry, and two bed rooms, and up stairs, one large bed room. The fuel house, &c. must, in this instance, be detached buildings. According to this plan, there is the smallest possible extent of wall, and very little flooring, against which advantages, a larger proportion of roof must be taken into consideration. Perhaps also those parts of the common wall, which are most remote from the chimney, might be reduced in substance.

No. IV. Two cottages, built together, with a centre wall, common to both. Each cottage contains a kitchen, pantry, and one bed room, on the ground floor, and two bed rooms in the upper story. The fuel house, &c. in this case, must either be detached buildings, or may be added in a lean-to, or skilling, at each end of the house. Such cottages, possessing



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all the requisites, have a smaller proportion of roof, but more wall and flooring than those last mentioned.

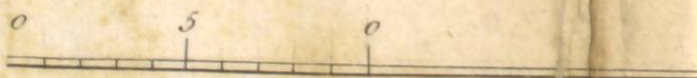
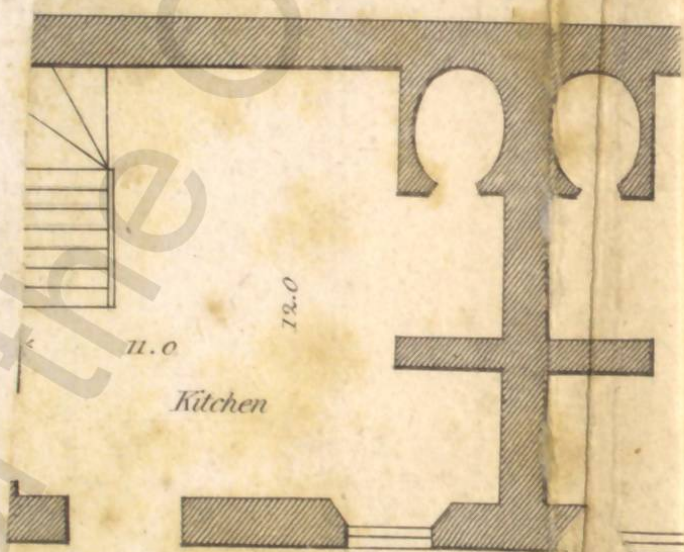
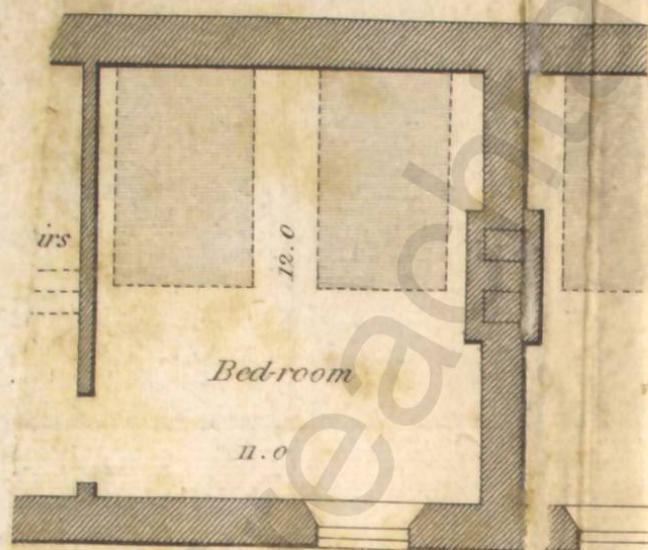
No. V. Two cottages, built together, with a centre wall, common to both. Each cottage contains a kitchen, pantry, one bed room, and a fuel house, on the ground floor, and two bed rooms in the upper story. The pantry and lower bed room are in a lean-to, at the back of the houses, and both a cow-stall and pig's house may be added in another lean-to, at each extremity of the building. These cottages having both cow-stalls and pigs' houses, instead of only the one or the other, are more convenient than those described in Plate No. IV; the flooring is nearly the same, but the roof is rather more expensive, and there is the additional expence of the low back wall of the lean-to. Such houses would be convenient for labourers, having both pigs and a cow; or for weavers, or others, requiring a workshop, or where the wife keeps a school, as what is proposed for a fuel house might be a school-room, or workshop; a door made in the partition to communicate with the kitchen, and the present door converted into a window; the present cow-stall might be used for a fuel house, and the pig's house

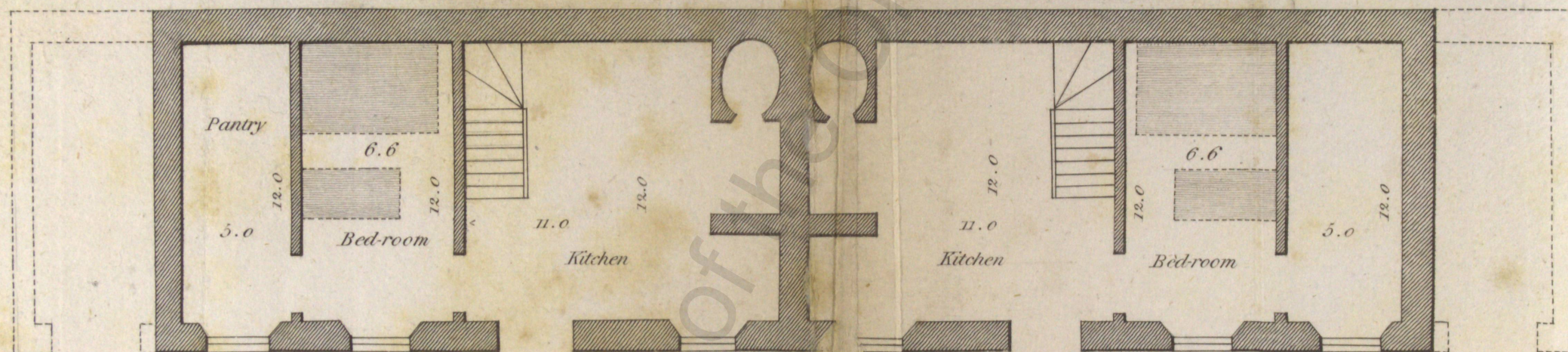
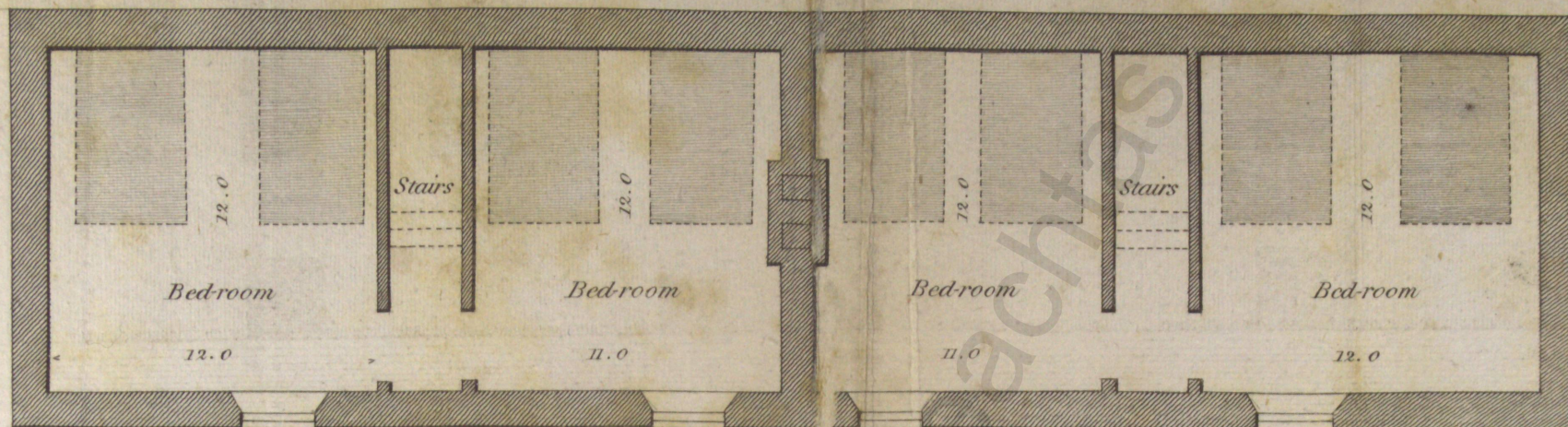
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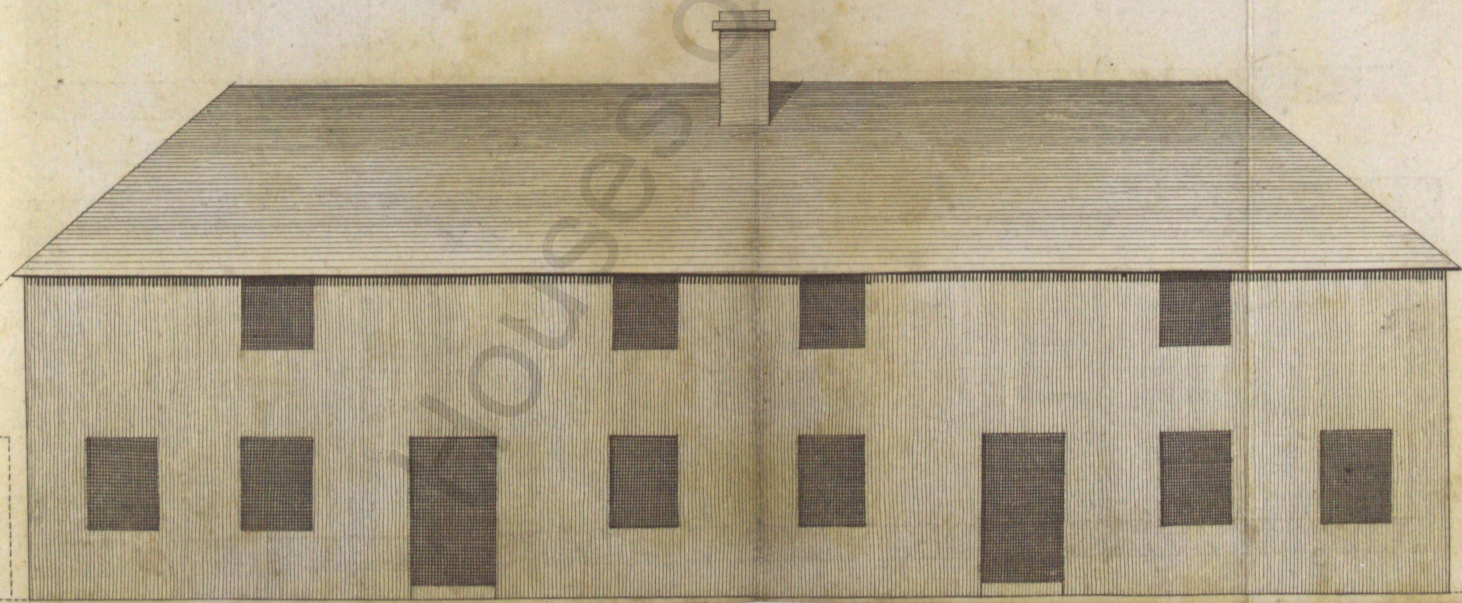
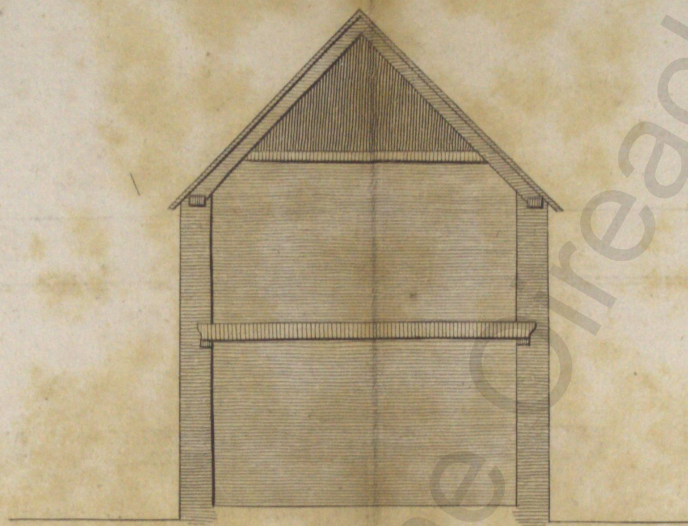
either for that purpose, or for a cow-stall, as may best suit the convenience of the family.

The lower floors may be of stone, brick, rammed clay, or chalk stucco, raised one step from the ground. The walls fourteen inches thick, where the cottages have two stories; in other cases, walls of less substance will be sufficient. All the casements should be made to open.

N^o 4.

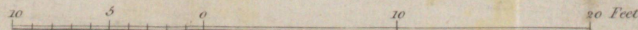
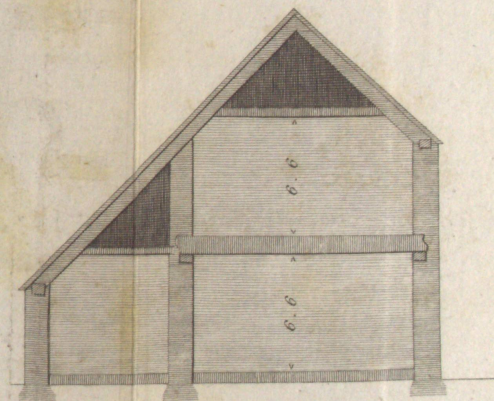
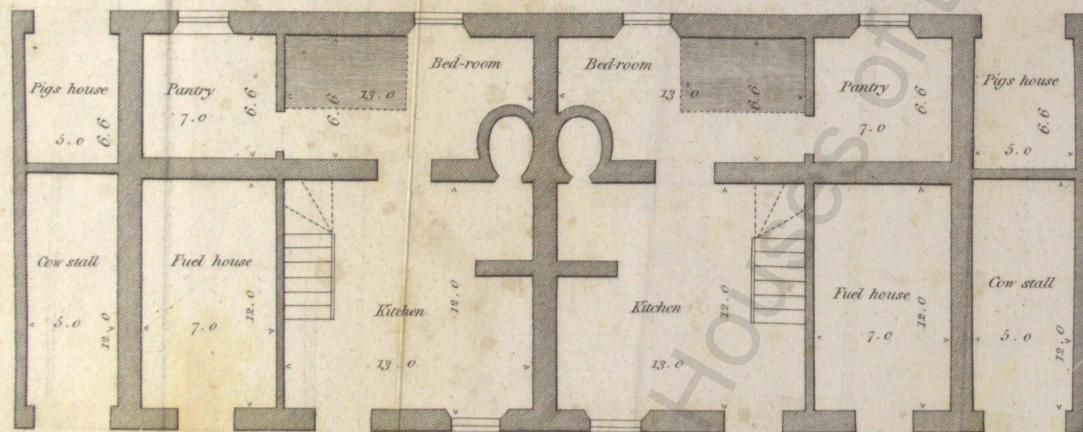
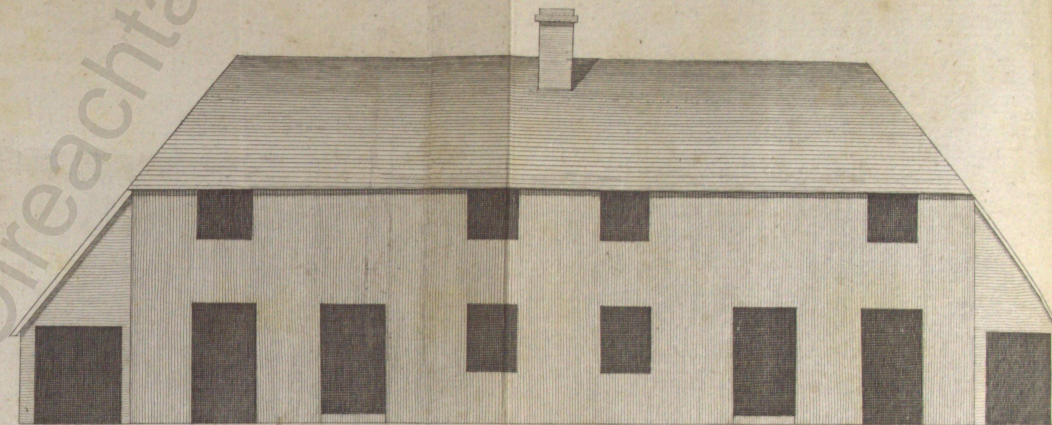
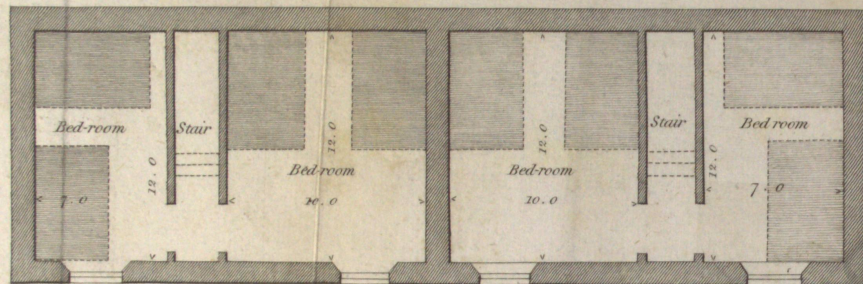






Houses of the Oireachtas

Houses of the Oireachtas



AN ADDRESS

TO THE LANDED INTEREST, &c.

AMONG the distresses of the poor, there are none more deserving of serious attention, than the difficulties they experience of procuring for themselves habitations and fuel. It is, however, no small consolation, that there are none also from which they can be more easily relieved.

A large proportion of them are absolutely precluded from leaving the parishes in which they happen to reside: if those, who have been removed by order of two justices, again leave their places of legal settlement, they render themselves liable to punishment, as rogues and vagabonds; and many, who have not been removed, but who have large families, and who of course suffer the most, are least able to change their places of resi-

dence, yet often cannot obtain cottages to live in, though able and willing to pay rent. Instances have occurred, where such persons have offered to pay a year in advance, but without success; for there were no houses to let to them. The expence of repairs induces many landlords to permit their cottages to fall to the ground, and the principle of depopulation, as the most effectual measure to reduce the burthen of the poor's-rate, is too prevalent among parish officers; who conceive it to be good policy to force people to emigrate, from the want of habitations, and, abandoning their villages, to seek for refuge and shelter in towns.

The deficiency of fuel, or the high price, and difficulty of obtaining it in small quantities, are very much felt in almost every part of the kingdom. It is not only an absolute necessary of life, but the consequence of this distress is, that breaking down hedges, lopping trees, and plundering woods and coppices, prevail so generally amongst the poor;

practices, which tend to familiarize their minds to dishonesty and plunder. At first, perhaps, they content themselves with picking up dead sticks ; but the quantity of these being insufficient fully to supply their wants, and the misery on the one hand, and the temptation on the other, being both so great, they soon lose sight of the injury done to the owner, and at last it too frequently happens, that, after having accustomed themselves to one description of pilfering without remorse, they are led on by degrees to the commission of other crimes, and to acts of greater devastation. Effectually to root out this evil is, therefore, not only a work of the greatest charity, but of high importance to the police of the country.

Let us first consider, whether it be just to compel men to remain in any particular parish, without securing to them the power of providing themselves and their families with the common necessities of life, and especially with habitations. They have no resource

(if they cannot prevail on some other poor persons to receive them, and to share with them houses seldom calculated to contain two families) but to be taken into a wretched poor-house, there to associate with the old, the infirm and decrepid, idiots and insane persons, the idle and the dissolute, loathsome from filth, and infested with vermin. They are crowded together without discrimination of sex or character ; and, having the worst examples constantly before their eyes, is it surprising that many become corrupt and depraved ?

This is no exaggerated account of parish poor-houses in many parts of the kingdom ; they strike horror into the breast of every stranger who approaches them. Indeed it is the avowed and premeditated design of the overseers in many country parishes, to render these houses objects of disgust and dread, with the view of deterring the poor from applying for relief ; refusing them, *illegally*, any assistance, if they do apply, (see

36 Geo. III. c. 23) unless they consent to reside in them. Whence it often happens, that many of the more deserving amongst the poor suffer extreme want, rather than be driven into those dreary mansions ; whilst relief is afforded to others who are not so well intitled to it, but who, having less regard to decency, comply with the terms offered. And, indeed, it may be observed in general, that one of the greatest abuses in the execution of the poor-laws is, that a distinction is seldom made between the dissolute poor, whose indigence arises from their own depravity, and who are deserving of punishment, and those of a contrary character and disposition, whose distresses have been caused by ill health, accident, or the number of their children : thus, instead of reward being bestowed on merit, the worthy often fare less well than the worthless.

To correct the evil above mentioned an easy remedy can be found. There are few parishes without several rough, incumbered,

and uncultivated tracts of land, which might be converted into large gardens, and on which cottages might be erected, either by some of the poor themselves to be held on lives, or at the expence of the parish or of the proprietors of estates. Where there is no land uncultivated, other grounds, which can be most conveniently spared, should be allotted to them. Many young men, having saved a little money, would be very desirous of taking such spots of ground on leases for three lives, and of building cottages thereon. I have frequently remarked that the labourers, who possess this kind of property, are the most industrious, sober, and frugal, that they seldom apply to their parishes for relief, and that their houses have an appearance of neatness and comfort, not often met with elsewhere. If these were more attainable by the poor, frugality would revive amongst them, and young people would strive to lay up a sum of money for this purpose. Every labourer, possessing such property of his own, would consider

himself as having a permanent interest and stake in the country. He would not be tempted to seek after innovations, or to be concerned in disturbances and riots. Some, perhaps, would afterwards, by strict economy and great industry, save money from the produce of their gardens and their daily labour, to enable themselves, after a certain number of years, to take dairies or small farms, where there are any; and the possibility of such a change of situation would be a strong incentive to many to be sober and industrious. The hope of improving their lot is the main spring of industry in all other stations in life: would it not be policy as well as humanity, to afford to the agricultural poor the same opportunity? The wealth and greatness of this country has been attributed, not only to the spirit of enterprize of our merchants and manufacturers, but to the effect which the possession and the security of property, enjoyed under our free and excellent constitution, have on

the minds of men. If this effect has been so salutary among other classes, why may not similar encouragement create the same energy among the cultivators of the land ; and why should these alone remain in an abject, dispirited, and distressed state? To attach this numerous, hardy, and less corrupted body of men more and more to their country, nothing would so much contribute, as allowing them the means of improving by industry their own situation in life, or that of their children. A man who owns a house, with a large garden annexed to it, on a lease for lives, for which he only pays a moderate quit-rent, is richer by far than he who receives much higher wages, but who has to pay a considerable rent for a cottage, with little or no garden ground, and who is obliged to purchase all he consumes. The produce of a garden diminishes the consumption of bread, which is the most considerable article of a poor man's expenditure : it is an advantage wholly created by the

cultivator's industry, at times when not otherwise engaged, and by that of his wife and children, and is therefore so much *labour*, or in other words *riches*, gained to the community; and the employment gives health and vigour to his children, inures them to fatigue, and trains them to industry. The value to him who receives the ground is immense, yet it is no loss to him who grants it. It procures the poor man comfort and plenty, and by so doing keeps within moderate bounds the wages of labour. Every man, who is averse to raising the wages of labour in husbandry, should at least encourage the culture of gardens. It is much to be wished, that the comforts of the agricultural poor could be universally extended a little farther, and that every family could be provided with pasture and meadow land for the feed of a cow: but that can only be obtained in grazing countries, where small grounds may be allotted to individuals, or to a certain number of labour-

ing families, in proportion to the number of acres contained in such grounds, so that each may have a right of feed for one cow :* the advantage from *gardens*, however, may be procured in *every situation*.

When a spot of ground is to be let on a lease for lives, the amount of the fine to be paid on future renewals will depend on that of the reserved quit-rent. The larger the quit-rent is, the smaller the fine will be. Where the fine is considerable, and the quit-rent merely nominal, the cottager, too often omitting to lay by money from time to time for such an event, whenever a life drops, finds himself embarrassed ; borrows the money wanted on a mortgage of his house, generally is a distressed man for several years after, and sometimes is completely ruined, and the property falls into

* See a Letter to the Board of Agriculture by the Earl of Winchilsea. The utility of the measure is evident, from the situation of his cottagers at Burleigh on the Hill.

the hands of his creditor. On the other hand, if the quit-rent be a large one, and the fine little or nothing, a man will be disinclined to build ; for he requires the double temptation, of the present advantage of a reduced annual rent, as well as those of the permanency of the property, and that all future improvements will be his own. As the land, on which such cottages would be built, will usually be of an inferior value, it will be enough to estimate it, at an average, at 10s. an acre ; where the land is better, a higher rent may be added without injustice ; for the better the land, the greater will be the advantage to the lessee from its produce as a garden. The quantity of land to be attached to such a cottage should be half an acre : if it be more than sufficient to produce the vegetables wanted for a family, a part of it may be sown with wheat for bread, pease to fatten the pigs, and barley for malt, to enable them to brew a little small beer, the want of which induces many to frequent

the ale-house, and proves the source of vicious courses.*

The corn in these gardens should be raised by dibbling, which is already very much practised in many parts of the kingdom. The cultivation of the garden will be chiefly conducted by the wife and younger children of the family, (who will thus very soon contribute largely to their own support, if not

* The duty on malt is certainly a most essential object of the revenue, but it operates as a prohibition with regard to the poor. If a remission of the duty could be granted to *labouring people having families and established habitations*, on a limited quantity of malt, whether made of barley produced in their own gardens, or otherwise, to enable them to brew small beer sufficient only for their own consumption, it would not only increase their COMFORTS, but have a signal effect on their HEALTH AND MORALS. Effectual means may certainly be found to prevent the indulgence being extended fraudulently; and the advantages to the community would abundantly compensate for the loss to the revenue, on the liquors improvidently drank by labouring people in ale-houses.

wholly maintain themselves, so that a numerous offspring will cease to be a great burden) to which must be added a certain proportion of assistance, at extra hours, from the father of it. Where 10s. an acre is the value of the land, 5s. per annum must of course be added for the half acre of ground, to the quit-rent for the house. Let that be 5s. also; and the whole annual payment will be 10s. and when it is considered that the proprietor of the estate has been at no expence whatsoever, in building or repairing the cottage, and that he receives annually the quit-rent for the house, in addition to the full rent of the land on which it is built, I think the fine to be required on putting in a life, should not exceed one year's purchase, computed on the real value. The cottager then, who builds a house upon this principle, acquires the following advantages; permanency of property, that all improvements are for the benefit of himself and his family, respectability of situation, a diminution of

annual expenditure, and that he cannot be removed under any circumstances. This arrangement will answer in all cases, where a labourer has a sufficiency of money to enable him to build a cottage; but that cannot be the lot of all. Yet a plan may be devised, by means of which, a man, having but a small proportion of the sum requisite for such an undertaking, may be enabled to adopt it. The owner of the land may, without risk, advance to any labourer in want of such assistance, £10. or even £15. towards carrying on his work, not to be paid to him in money, but laid out for his use as wanted, in the purchase of materials, or in wages to the workmen whom he is obliged to call in to assist him in the construction of his house. The cottage itself will be a perfect security for the loan, since the money will only be issued in proportion as the work advances. The borrower should pay interest for this loan at 5 per cent. and a part of the principal money

every year, to the extent of 10 per cent. of the sum borrowed at the least. If he fails in making these payments punctually, his effects should be liable to be distrained ; or, if the demand cannot be otherwise satisfied in a reasonable time, the house itself should be disposed of to answer it. The sooner he pays off his debt, the better it will be for him, and he will look forward with impatience to the time of its liquidation, that he may enjoy the effects of his industry and so comfortable a situation. In ten years, however, at all events, he will be clear from incumbrances, and in the mean while he will have to pay each year no more, than what he would probably have given as annual rent for a house, and afterwards the quit-rent alone. The landlord also is benefited by being relieved from the expence of repairs, and by the reduction of the burden of the poor's-rate, arising from the improved situation of the poor ; he receives a quit-rent annually, and a fine from time to time,

in addition to the full rent of his land, as well as 5 per cent. interest on the money lent, and the whole debt is discharged in ten years at farthest. If it be not convenient to the landlord to advance money for this purpose, it would be the most beneficial measure which a parish could adopt, to borrow a sum of money at interest, sufficient to supply every labourer in want of it with such assistance: and money might be lent in like manner to labourers, towards the purchase of cottages already built, and in which they now live at rack rent, and for converting them into life-hold tenements, on the like terms, and with equal benefit to the landlords and the poor.

But if the person, in want of an habitation, has not the means or the wish to build, or purchase a cottage on the abovementioned principle, the parish should be compellable to provide one for him. By the 43 Eliz. c. 2. s. 5. the churchwardens and overseers of the poor of a parish may, with the consent of

the lord of the manor, and by order of the justices at the quarter sessions, erect, build, and set up on the waste, at the charge of the parish, hundred, or county, convenient houses of dwelling for *impotent* poor. This provision should not be optional, but obligatory, where the necessity is ascertained, and should extend to *any* poor in want of houses.

Let us now consider in what manner that necessity is to be so ascertained, and what regulations may be proper for the due execution of the plan. On the complaint of a poor person, that there is no cottage to be rented in the parish where such person is legally settled, two justices should inquire into the fact, and if they find it true, they should give ten days notice, in writing, to the lord of the manor, and to the churchwardens and overseers of the parish where such grievance exists, that they will report the same to the next quarter-sessions; to afford them an opportunity, if they should be desirous so to do, of shewing cause, why an

order should not issue for building, at the expence of the parish (if the owners of estates will not do it on their own account, in proportion to the number of poor requiring habitations, and to their own property) so many cottages as may seem necessary ; which expence, if assessed on the tenantry, should be allowed them again, in the same manner as the land tax usually is, by the proprietors of estates. If no objection be made on the part of the lord of the manor, or of the parish officers, or the objection, if made, does not appear to be well founded, an order should issue for the erecting the cottages, either on the waste, or elsewhere, as shall be most convenient to the lord of the manor, or proprietor of the land on which such a cottage is intended to be erected, and at the same time to those who are in want of habitations. The site should be determined by two indifferent persons, and by an umpire named by them, in case they do not agree in opinion ; one of those persons to be

appointed by the justices at the quarter-sessions, and the other by the lord of the manor, or proprietor of the land. These commissioners should take care, that the cottages be fit for the reception of such poor families, both as to convenience and healthiness of situation, and should certify the same at the next quarter-sessions after the completion of the work ; and should also certify, that half an acre of garden ground is actually allotted to each cottage. Where the labourer can pay rent, he should be called upon for it ; and where he is too poor to afford it, it should be charged to the parish account, as relief given to him in the form of rent. The expence of erecting and fitting them up in a proper manner would probably amount to about £45. each, or £90. for two of them built together. The rent to be charged, should be 45s. per annum, exclusively of the value of the garden. These cottages would then produce 5 per cent. interest on the money expended, which is suf-

ficient for such buildings ; though in towns it is usually expected that money so laid out should yield at the least 6 per cent.; the landlords then, or the parish (which is in fact the same thing, for it is the collective body of landlords) have a fair interest for what they have disbursed.

These cottages should be so constructed as to provide convenient, decent, and comfortable habitations for the poor, at the least possible expence to those who are to pay for them. The choice of the materials, of which they should be built, must depend on local circumstances ; but the size and plan of the houses may be nearly the same. Where families are large, the proposed accommodation is requisite ; where they are not, an opportunity is afforded of providing single people with lodgings, who will pay rent for them, and which will be a benefit to both parties. I am not an advocate for putting the labouring man above his proper station ; but, on the other hand, I think the industrious

poor have just pretensions to the care and protection of the legislature. No man will assert, that a suitable habitation is not one of those comforts to which such a man has a claim, especially when he is ready to pay rent for it, and has it not in his power to go elsewhere. In building cottages, there are certain points which convenience and decency require. Every cottage should consist of a kitchen, a pantry for storing provisions, and *three* sleeping rooms; one for the parents with perhaps the youngest child, one for the sons, and one for the daughters. The expence of erecting a fuel house and pigsty, need not be taken into the estimate, because a shed will suffice for either; and it may reasonably be expected, that the man should afterwards be at the small charge of building them himself for his own advantage, and both may as well be detached from the house. The high price of timber renders it desirable to avoid the use of it in cottages as much as may be, as well as to

adopt every other practicable reduction of expence. With this view the annexed plans have been sketched: they are simple and economical, and of the smallest size possible, to include all the requisites and conveniences abovementioned. The walls may be built of rough stone, stud-work, brick, mud, or in such manner as is most cheap, and in common use in the neighbourhood; the rafters should be ashen or other poles, and the covering thatch or pan-tiles; the floors below stairs, stone, brick, lime and sand, or lime and chalk stucco; and the staircase a simple flight of steps, with a hand-rail.

The comfort of poor people in the country, residing in such cottages, whether as proprietors or as lodgers, will infinitely exceed what can be their lot in the best conducted workhouses, or houses of industry. A most respectable character, Mr. Davis of Longleat, whose extensive knowledge on these subjects is universally allowed, makes a very judicious distinction in a letter to the

writer of these pages, between work-houses in *cities or towns*, and in the *country*. “ They
“ are (says he) of two distinct kinds, to-
“ tally different in their principle, their ma-
“ nagement, and their utility. In the former,
“ especially if the city or town be very
“ large and populous, a work-house is one
“ of the noblest institutions that humanity
“ ever devised; in the latter case, it is in its
“ very nature in a country thinly peopled,
“ (and especially a district work-house) a
“ system of terror, if not of oppression. In
“ country villages, the system of taking the
“ labourers and their families from their cot-
“ tages, from their gardens, and from the
“ society in which they have been brought
“ up, and in which consists their only enjoy-
“ ment, and carrying them (frequently to a
“ considerable distance) to be immured in a
“ work-house is not only cruelty, but impo-
“ licy. In such villages the expence of house
“ rent for a family, or that of putting a single
“ person to board with another family, being

“ much less than in towns, no person can
“ be maintained so cheap in a work-house as
“ out of it ; to say nothing of the bad effects
“ which must attend the removal of persons
“ bred up in the full enjoyment of country
“ air and exercise, to the close air and se-
“ dentary life of a work-house, and of the
“ cruelty of removing such persons (as is
“ the case in district work-houses) far from
“ their relations and connections, and taking
“ them from their habitual employ in hus-
“ bandry, to be taught manufactures. What
“ is the difference, except in name, between
“ sending poor persons to these houses as a
“ relief, or to a house of correction to beat
“ hemp as a punishment !! In large popu-
“ lous cities or towns, a removal of paupers
“ from garrets and cellars to a work-house,
“ where they may enjoy (what was out of
“ their reach before) air, cleanliness, and
“ comfort, is an indulgence instead of a pu-
“ nishment. These cannot be said to be
“ torn from their *homes*, for they had none ;

“ nor are they deprived of the comfort of
 “ associating, at their leisure hours, with
 “ their relations and connections, because
 “ they remain in the same town. And house
 “ rent in such towns being generally high,
 “ and provisions and fuel dear, and the poor
 “ used to live more luxuriously than in the
 “ country, the parish can support them at
 “ a less expence in a work-house than out of
 “ it. If they are capable of work, they are
 “ not out of the reach of that employ in
 “ which they have been educated, and what
 “ is of the greatest consequence, the morals
 “ of the infant poor may be kept much more
 “ pure in a work-house, than in the streets of
 “ a populous town.”

In the same letter Mr. Davis draws a
 comparison between the cost of maintaining
 the poor in the country in a work-house, and
 at their own houses. He mentions that the
 result of an elaborate and minute inquiry
 on this subject was, that every individual in
 a work-house cost the parish, at an average,

after deducting their earnings, 2s. weekly per head ; whereas those who had constant relief out of the house cost individually considerably less than 1s. per week. The cause of this difference he attributes to the difference in their food. He remarks that “ in “ country villages the poor subsist chiefly “ on potatoes and tea, and many of them do “ not touch animal food or malt-liquor for “ weeks together ; the pleasure of being “ their own masters gives them a sort of “ consequence and independence, which reconciles them to this food, bad as it is. In “ work-houses the poor must have bread, “ cheese, beef, bacon, and small beer, and an “ overseer would not dare to feed them on “ such food in a work-house, as the same “ poor would themselves use out of it.” The difference also in the expence of clothing, bedding, and fuel, should be taken into the account. It seems to me that the feelings, and even the prejudices of the poor, are intitled to the most full and dispassionate con-

sideration. These work-houses are unquestionably *places of confinement*, and there can exist no right to consign people, because they are poor, to a prison, and to act towards them as if they were delinquents, because they cannot maintain themselves without assistance. *Houses of industry* are often confounded with *schools of industry*. The former, on account of the numbers who inhabit them, must necessarily be places of considerable restraint, to preserve any degree of good order or regularity ; and are liable also to another objection, that “ confinement therein tends to “ enfeeble the human frame, and to render “ those who are educated or supported “ in them unfit for manly employments.” The latter are certainly liable to no objection, but are of great utility. In them the female children of the poor especially are taught to knit and spin, and to make, mend, and wash their own clothes ; they are of trifling expence ; for almost any cottage will be found fit for a school of industry, without

erecting any new buildings ; and the smaller the number of children is under the care of any teacher, the better on every account. A schoolmistress can scarcely take charge of more than ten or twelve ; more attention can be paid to their instruction ; they are less likely to be turbulent or disobedient, or to corrupt each other ; and a greater number of poor women will be benefited by the small salaries granted to them for giving up their time to the instruction of the children. The arrangement of the schools of industry in the city of Chester appears to me to be so well digested and methodized, that I cannot forbear to insert it at length as an Appendix. It is on a principle equally applicable to villages as to the largest cities or towns ; and as such I trust it will not be considered as unconnected with the subject, but as tending to prove that every advantage is attainable in country parishes, without recurring to the establishment of expensive and oppressive work-houses.

Lastly, with respect to the want of fuel,

the same means which would effectually relieve the distress of the poor, would remove that which frequently is the original source of dishonesty. It should be enacted, that the churchwardens and overseers of every parish do take an account of the number of *labouring families, and other poor persons* within the same. An estimate should then be made of the quantity of fuel (of such sort as can be procured on the best terms) which will be sufficient for the full annual consumption of all such families within the parish ; and this estimate should have the approbation of two neighbouring justices. The parish officers should lay in a stock of such fuel at the most advantageous time of the year, should provide a proper place within the parish to store it, and should deliver, or cause to be delivered out, to the poor every Saturday evening, after work is over, for ready money only, and at a certain price (calculated to replace the first cost of the fuel, the real expence of storing, and of

delivering it out) such quantities as shall have been fixed upon as really necessary for the weekly consumption of each family, and no more, regard being had to the time of the year, and other circumstances. Very heavy penalties should be laid on parish officers neglecting any part of this duty, as well as on such of the poor who may sell the parish fuel, or on persons proved to have purchased of poor persons any part of it. Their necessities being thus provided for, severe punishment on stealing wood or fuel of any sort, and on the receiver thereof, could not be objected to, for at present the penalties are perfectly ineffectual, and inadequate to the evil done. Where families are too poor to purchase fuel, the parish officers should in a like proportion supply them with it, as parochial relief, and account for it accordingly. Every invention for diminishing the consumption of fuel, should be attended to, especially in summer, when it is only wanted for cooking and washing ; and the late

improvements for increasing heat, whilst they lessen the quantity of the fuel consumed, should be introduced into general use, and at such prices as the poor may be able to pay. Were such a plan adopted, none could be distressed from the want of fuel, nor could they have any excuse to allege in mitigation of their offence, if detected in stealing it.

Houses of the Oireachtas

APPENDIX.

On the Institution of WORKING-SCHOOLS for poor Girls, and of SUNDAY - SCHOOLS for poor Boys and Girls, in Chester.

IT may be useful and satisfactory to explain to the subscribers of the charity schools, and the public, the motive, plan, and progress of these establishments.

Among the higher and middle ranks of our citizens, the female principles and behaviour are in a high degree virtuous and irreproachable. They probably were never more excellent at any time or place. The conduct of the women of the lowest class is a wretched contrast to this character. So striking a difference appears to proceed chiefly, if not entirely, from their different mode of education. The former are early instructed in religious and moral principles, in useful

skill, and industrious habits: the latter are brought up in utter ignorance and idleness. It had been observed, by those who visit the habitations of the poor, that their children, even their daughters, were destitute, to a very astonishing degree, of every useful employment. On this consideration, a working-school, for poor girls, was lately established in St. John's parish, where the suspicion of their ignorance was fully proved by facts. Though the girls sent to this school were from nine to thirteen years of age, yet so large a proportion of them as *three fourths* could not sew at all, and not one of the best could sew so well as to make a single article of dress. They were equally ignorant of knitting and spinning. Being thus wretchedly unskilful in the common and most useful arts of life, they are plainly disqualified for domestic servants, and for most other offices in society, and have few means in their power to earn an honest maintenance. Some people strangely doubt the propriety

and utility of teaching the poor to read; but all must allow the advantages, and even the urgent necessity, of instructing them to work.

At the general enumeration of the inhabitants, there were 4486 children, of both sexes, under 15 years old, in the nine parishes of the city of Chester, of whom 970 were in St. John's parish; that is, between one fourth and one fifth of the whole. We found, upon trial, that one day-school of forty was fully sufficient to teach all the *poor* girls in St. John's parish, who were of a proper age for instruction and unemployed. From these facts it appeared, that four schools, consisting of 40 girls each, to be taught for four years, would nearly comprehend all the poor objects who would require charitable assistance for their education.* It was proposed that the girls should change their school every year; besides being taught

* It appeared by a survey taken in 1774 by the ingenious Dr. Haygarth, that the number of males in the city

to read at all the schools, and brought to church twice every Sunday, it was intended that they should learn in the first to knit, in the second to spin, in the third to sew, and in the fourth to wash and get up linen. The schools were to be situated, as nearly as may be,

of Chester, and its suburbs, was	-	-	6697
Females	-	-	8016
			<hr/>
Total	-		14713

If, therefore, four schools, of *forty-two girls* each are sufficient for the education of all the *poor* girls between the ages of 9 and 13 years, in a city containing almost 15,000 inhabitants, it is fair to conclude, that in most places the proportion will be nearly the same, and that there will be but *one* such poor girl to educate out of about 88 persons, or about 11 out of every 1000; and consequently that those who are disposed to establish schools of industry in any town or parish where the number of inhabitants has been at all ascertained, may thus determine how many schools will be necessary, effectually, and to the full extent, to answer the purpose. On this principle it seems, that the number of poor girls in the *metropolis*, requiring such education, is about ELEVEN THOUSAND, and the number of schools necessary, TWO HUNDRED AND SIXTY TWO.

within a quarter of a mile of the centre of the city, that the scholars might, without inconvenience, go each year to a different school: by this arrangement each girl might have the benefit of the best instruction, being taught, by each mistress, the art in which she is most skilful, as the best knitter, spinner, sewer, and washer. The proper age for such instruction would be, previous to their going out to service, as from nine to thirteen, or rather older. On this plan 160 would be educated. If to these be added the eight poor girls already fed, clothed, and instructed, by a separate and established charity, the total number being 168, there would be 42, whose education might be annually completed, which are exactly one third of the whole; for it appears from Dr. Price's observations (vol. 2. p. 111.) that there are 126 girls, nine years of age, in Chester. The number of those of ten, eleven, and twelve, does not materially differ, making in the whole 504; and as more than two thirds of

the whole number of children are the offspring of persons whose property renders them not objects of charity, reducing them to 168, as abovementioned, four such schools are therefore sufficient for the whole population of this city.

Such was the original intention ; and it is likely to be accomplished with a degree of success, which must be extremely pleasing to the subscribers and to all the friends of humanity. The knitting, spinning, and sewing schools, of forty girls each, have been very regularly attended. By their industry and skill each scholar daily earns something, and by their own work many will be enabled to clothe themselves ; their fellow citizens will soon see the most meritorious dressed in the same uniform, the industry of their own hands. This is a present benefit to the poor children, and affords a pleasing prospect of advantages to every future day of their lives. No difficulty has occurred in supplying work for the knitters and spinners ; but employ-

ment for the sewers has been much more difficult to obtain: and, on this occasion, we solicit all well-wishers to the institution to supply the sewing-school with plain work, both coarse and fine, as the different scholars have acquired various degrees of proficiency in sewing: whatever is intrusted to their care will be executed neatly, and on moderate terms. Indeed this defect has lately been, in some degree, supplied by the lady-visitors, whose kindness, care, and beneficence to the poor girls whom they superintend, ought to be acknowledged in terms of the warmest gratitude. Their humanity being touched by the ragged objects thus collected from the most indigent of their fellow-citizens, out of their own private and separate bounty, they have, with compassionate generosity, clothed great numbers of these half-naked girls, with gowns and petticoats, as well as every other article of dress; and all, except shoes and stockings, were made at the sewing-school. To a few of the

most destitute they have allowed a weekly pension, to relieve the hungry with food. They watch, with earnest solicitude, all their improvements in reading, working, and behaviour. We have thus the fairest hopes to behold the young generation growing up in habits and skill to obtain an honest and comfortable maintenance, and training up in the best principles of morality and religion. Our aim is, to fit them for their humble station, to be happy in themselves, and useful to the community, as good servants, wives, and mothers. However, we cannot reasonably hope to work a perfect reformation of manners in the present scholars. The pernicious example of their own family and neighbours will, undoubtedly, in some degree, countervail our instructions. When the present scholars become mothers, we may expect much greater improvement in their children, as a domestic pattern will add great influence to the benefit of a good education. In this view, we may fairly ex-

pect a gradual improvement in future generations.

Some difficulty has arisen in supplying the sewers with work, and still greater may occur in obtaining employment for a school to wash and get up linen: this part of the plan has not hitherto been attempted; it will remain for the future consideration of the society, whether such a school can be established, or whether three years' education in three schools will be deemed sufficient. On either plan, the proposed number of 42 girls will annually receive their education.

As our Sunday-schools are conducted on the same plan as in other places, they require no particular explanation. All the poor children who offer are received: and all well-wishers to the improvement and reformation of the poor are requested to inquire among their neighbours and dependents, whether there are any so ignorant and abandoned as to neglect the offered kindness. The most deserving girls among the

Sunday-schools are regularly elected into the working-schools. Though the boys have not so regular a succession into their day-school, yet as every resident subscriber to the latter is also a subscriber to the former school, and equally interested in the success of both institutions, for the education of poor children, they who have attended the Sunday-schools with the greatest regularity have easily obtained an appointment to the day-schools, when they arrived at a proper age. After these boys have been instructed for two years in their day-school, the most meritorious, comprehending about one-half of the day-scholars, are elected into the Blue-coat Hospital, where they not only receive instruction, but food, clothes, and complete maintenance, for two years, and, on compliance with the rules of the charity, an apprentice fee, when their education is finished. This election according to merit has an excellent effect, in exciting their emulation, and in securing their obedience. As all the

resident subscribers to the blue-school for girls are also supporters, and many of them zealous supporters, of the Sunday and working-schools, it is highly probable, that when no orphan, or other object of peculiar distress, solicits their compassion, they will often select, for one year, the most necessitous and best-behaved girls, who have attended the working-schools for two or three years. This charitable institution is judiciously conducted, and bestows food, clothes, lodging, and complete maintenance, as well as the most useful instruction : the hopes of meriting such a reward would have a very extensive and beneficial influence over both the children and their parents.

No person subscribes more than *a crown*; a sum which may be well afforded by every family in easy circumstances. In others of more opulence, several individuals of the same family are subscribers. Besides about 450 crowns, subscriptions, there have been many very generous benefactions, which, at

the commencement of the institution, were peculiarly seasonable to supply the expence of books, wheels, forms, &c.

Our late excellent prelate, the present Bishop of London, not only gave his sanction to the original proposal, by preaching a sermon, with persuasive energy and fervent piety, to recommend the plan, which from its novelty, might expect to encounter various objections ; but so heartily did he approve the establishment, as generously to bestow the profits of its publication, with another benefaction, upon this charity.

Thus, at the various charity schools, now fairly established, all the poor boys and girls in Chester are invited to receive an excellent education. The Sunday-schools gladly admit all who ask for instruction. From this general source, the working-schools for girls and the day-schools for boys are supplied. These children, in succession, according to their wants and their merits, are promoted into the blue-schools for boys, and,

probably, for girls, where they are completely maintained, as well as instructed. No proper objects want a friend, unless their parents are guilty of the most blameable negligence; indeed the most abandoned wish instructions for their offspring. From these institutions, we may reasonably hope to behold the rising generation daily improve in skill, industry, honesty, fidelity, and the various virtues which generally result from a good education.

NUMBER OF THE SCHOLARS.

The blue-boys	-	-	-	30
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The blue-girls	-	-	-	8
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The day-school of boys	-	120
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The working-school of girls	120
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The Sunday-schools are fluctuating,

but sometimes contain	-	550
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Total	<u>828</u>
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General Rules respecting the Sunday and working-schools, established by charitable contributions in the city of Chester, on the 25th day of March, 1787.

I. The chief management and direction of all these schools shall be vested in a committee of twenty persons, nine of whom shall be the resident officiating clergy of the nine parishes within the city of Chester, of the treasurer and secretary, and of nine other persons, who shall be chosen by ballot from the whole number of subscribers, by the majority of them, who shall be present at a general meeting, which shall be held on the last Thursday in April, in every year.

II. The committee shall meet on the first Wednesday in every month, at twelve o'clock, at the Blue-Coat Hospital, in Chester, and three of them (if more shall not attend) shall be a sufficient number to proceed to the business of these institutions.

III. The Sunday-schools are to instruct

the children in reading, and in the first principles of the Christian religion; and the working-schools are farther to instruct the girls in sewing plain work, knitting, spinning, washing, and getting up linen.

IV. No children shall be admitted into the Sunday-schools under the age of six years; nor any girls into the working-schools under the age of nine years, at the least. And, as vacancies shall happen in the working-schools, those girls who shall appear to the committee to be most deserving among the Sunday scholars, and who have attended the most regularly, shall have the preference to supply them.

V. The children admitted into all the schools shall constantly attend the public worship of the established church every Sabbath day, according to the directions of those persons who shall be appointed visitors of these respective schools.

VI. A visitor from each parish, or for such parishes wherein there is a Sunday-school,

shall be chosen quarterly out of the committee present at the monthly meetings, and three other persons shall be chosen visitors, in the like manner and at the same time.

VII. The four ladies, managers of the Blue-coat Girl's School, together with eight other ladies, subscribers, to be named the first year by the committee, and afterwards by the visitors of the preceding year, the first Wednesday in May, shall be requested to act as visitors or managers of the working-schools.

VIII. The visitors shall provide proper books and other necessaries for the use of the scholars, and shall have power to remove any teacher, and to expel any scholar, for the want of proper qualification, for disobedience, or for any gross act of misbehaviour; but the teacher so removed, and the parents of the child or children so expelled, may appeal to the committee at any monthly meeting, when, upon proof of such disqualification being removed, or of such disobedience or other misbehaviour duly repented

of, the committee may, if they shall think fit, recommend them to be again taken into the school.

IX. The visitors shall enter minutes of their proceeding, in books to be provided for that purpose, which shall be laid before the committee at each monthly meeting.

X. After three years from the commencement of the school, namely, in March, 1790, all the working scholars shall be admitted for the first year into the knitting, for the second into the spinning, and for the third into the sewing school. And as vacancies shall happen, during the year, they shall be supplied in like manner from the schools in the above order, according to the priority of the admission of such scholars, of which an exact register shall be kept. The lady visitors shall direct, in the mean time, what proportion of the scholars shall be removed to each school.

XI. A register of the work done by the girls shall be kept and shewn to the com-

mittee at each meeting ; the profit of their work shall be divided equally between the mistress and the girl who earns it ; the girl's share to be laid out in stuff, check, &c. for gowns, aprons, &c. for her own use, of a peculiar kind and colour, so as to make their merit generally conspicuous ; and each girl in the working-schools shall have a green bonnet given her annually, distinguishing each school by a different coloured riband.

XII. Each Sunday and working-school shall contain forty scholars.

XIII. The girls shall go to the working-schools at seven o'clock in the morning from Lady-day to Michaelmas, and at eight o'clock from Michaelmas to Lady-day, and continue in the school till twelve o'clock ; and go again at one o'clock in the afternoon, and continue till six o'clock in the summer, and till four o'clock in the winter ; they shall be allowed eight holidays at Christmas, and every Saturday afternoon,

and at no other time, without the special leave of a visitor.

XIV. The children of the Sunday-schools shall attend at nine o'clock in the morning, and again at one in the afternoon, and continue till the time of divine service, and be taught for two hours immediately after divine service in the afternoon.

XV. The names of the scholars in all the schools shall be written in a book, and called over each morning and evening, by the teachers, who shall mark the absentees; which book shall be shewn to the visitors, who shall inquire into the cause of such absence, and shall reprove or even expel such scholar, as the case may require.

XVI. The teachers of all the schools shall begin and finish the duties of the day with a suitable prayer, to be fixed upon by the visitors, in which the children shall join, as they shall be directed, in a decent and devout manner,

and again attend in the afternoon, and continue till the time of divine service, and be taught for two hours immediately after divine service in the afternoon.

XV. The names of the scholars in all the schools shall be written in a book, and called over each morning and evening, by the teachers, who shall mark the absentees; which book shall be shown to the visitors, who shall inquire into the cause of such absence, and shall report on every school such report as the case may require.

XVI. The members of all the schools shall attend and finish the duties of the day in some place, to be fixed upon by the visitors, in which the children shall join; they shall be received in a decent and