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AMALGAMATION OF UNIONS

AND



PROPOSED MODIFICATIONS IN THE POOR-LAW
(IRELAND).

BY

C. RALEIGH CHICHESTER,

LATE LIEUT.-COLONEL.

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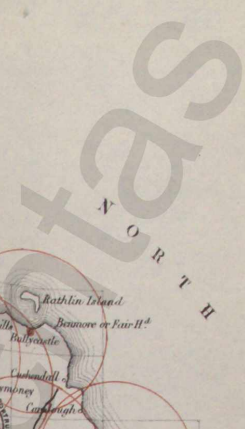
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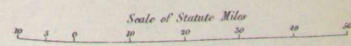
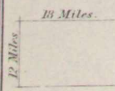
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RUNNAMOAT, ROSCOMMON,
March 3rd, 1879.

MY DEAR O'CONOR DON :—

A pamphlet is not a kind of merchandise likely to be much called for, unless the name over it, like a well-known trade mark carries weight.

Mine having no weight of its own, I have sought to tempt the public to inspect my wares, under the shadow of yours.

But not alone on that account have I sought your permission to dedicate to you this essay, but, because by doing so, I may attract your attention to a subject worthy of all your philanthropy—of all your talents—of all your powers of work.

In the course of these pages, there will, I hope, be found much with which Catholic or Protestant, Conservative or Liberal, may sympathise and agree.

However that may be, your name in front of them makes you responsible for nothing, beyond your faith in the humble earnestness of a friend and neighbour.

Very faithfully yours,

C. RALEIGH CHICHESTER.

THE O'CONOR DON, M.P.,
Clonalis, Castlerea.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
DEDICATION,	5
PREFACE,	7
CHAPTER I.	
THE ARGUMENT,	9
CHAPTER II.	
AMALGAMATION OF UNIONS,	10
CHAPTER III.	
OBJECTIONS DETAILED AND ANSWERED,	13
(<i>a</i>)—Effect of Increased Areas on the Poor,	14
(<i>b</i>)—The Effect of Increased Areas on Management,	18
(<i>c</i>)—The Objection derived from the smallness of the Proposed Saving,	<i>ib.</i>
CHAPTER IV.	
MANAGEMENT BY BOARDS AND BY COMMITTEES COMPARED,	20
CHAPTER V.	
ON THE CONSTITUTION OF OUR POOR-LAW BOARDS, ETC.—Change suggested,	24
CHAPTER VI.	
RECAPITULATION,	27
(<i>a</i>)—Re-allotment of Areas,	<i>ib.</i>
(<i>b</i>)—Committees,	<i>ib.</i>
(<i>c</i>)—Board of Guardians or of Relief,	28
(<i>d</i>)—Constitution of Boards of Relief,	29

CHAPTER VII.

	PAGE
ANALYSIS OF THE CONSTITUTION AND PROCEEDINGS OF THE COMMISSION OF INQUIRY,	29
Queries of Commissioners,	30

CHAPTER VIII.

CLASSIFICATION,	35
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Workhouse System as applied to the Training of Youth,	i
APPENDIX A—Rev. E. J. O'Dwyer. Answer to Queries,	xv
APPENDIX B—Letter to Bishops of Ireland,	xix
APPENDIX C—Extract from <i>Daily Express</i> ,	xxi
APPENDIX D—Letter to Chaplains of Workhouses, with Queries,	xxii
APPENDIX E—Letter of William D'Esterre Parker, Esq., P.L.G., Cork,	xxv
APPENDIX F—Parliamentary Return, Capacity of Workhouses, etc., with Summary,	xxvi
APPENDIX G—Parliamentary Return, Children, Idiots, etc.,	xxxiv
APPENDIX H—Areas, Population, Valuation, etc.,	xxxv

PREFACE.

FORESEEING the nature of the Report which sooner or later would be published by the "Poor Law Union and Lunacy Inquiry Commission," then in full session, this pamphlet was blocked out some months ago in the hope that something might be done to counteract the tendency of that Report.

It has been laying ready for the printer many weeks, but as it pretended to prognosticate the result of the Inquiry Commission, or as I may put it, to diagnose the symptoms which that Commission was manifesting, it was absolutely necessary that I should have had the Report in my hands before sending the MSS. to the printer.

If I had done so without this precautionary delay, there would have been about the work, (no matter how true the forecast should be ultimately proved to have been,) an appearance of unreality and of speculation, whereas it is the outcome of steady labour, toil, and thought.

That such a forecast should have been possible, appears to me to detract immensely from the confidence which the Report of a Commission ought to merit.

Having had this Report in my hands some half-a-dozen hours, I see no reason for further delay—all I have had to add, are a few notes, I think three. Quickness of attack, is at least something in warfare, and being as I am a Dwarf in presence of a Giant—having as an individual, the hardihood of trying to upset a State Paper, I can forego no advantage within my reach.

Beyond a scattered note or two, I have not alluded to the conclusions of, or the arguments contained in the Report, except so far as I had done so by forecast; I believe, however, I have stated and met most of them, if not all; (so far of course, as the amalgamation

question is concerned) and I see no use in delaying publication in order to examine and criticise the Report categorically.

It is obviously useless my doing so, for those who will not read this Pamphlet: almost useless for those who will not read the Report. Those who will read both, will be in a position to judge for themselves, and will draw their own conclusions. The argumentation I have made use of appears to me sufficiently expanded; the expedients by which I endeavour to meet the friction, which change of any sort would be sure to set up, has been sufficiently explained; and I do not see that the benefits to be derived by publishing a critique on the Report of the late Commission, would do as much good, as delay in meeting that Report would do harm.

Nevertheless, if the reception which this little work may meet with, has in store for me any encouragement whatever, I hope in the course of a few weeks, when this Pamphlet and the Report shall have had some little circulation, to issue a supplement which will contain a detailed review of the Report of the Commission.

A careful study of that Report would, it seems to me, so strengthen by contrast the conclusions to which this pamphlet is intended to bring the reader; would bring so much nearer realization the results to which it obviously points; would so intensify the light which is now being brought to bear on these interesting questions; that the greatness of the prize, removes from me, fear of failure, if not its danger.

C. RALEIGH CHICHESTER.

March 3rd, 1879.

AMALGAMATION OF UNIONS, AND PROPOSED MODIFICATIONS IN THE POOR-LAW (IRELAND).



CHAPTER I.

THE ARGUMENT.

WHEN change of circumstances, or of time, renders the working of any of our institutions unsuitable or inconvenient, a sense of discomfort gradually takes possession of the public mind. It tosses and it agitates until the Government of the day comes to the conclusion that something must be done.

When matters have so far progressed, the usual course is to issue a Commission of Inquiry, and the composition of the Commission, and the direction and result of its labours, will depend largely on the degree of irritation which the public pulse denotes. Thus, a Commission is not necessarily blameable for any disappointment which may follow from its conclusions, nor is the Government to be blamed for the fashion of its appointment. These things are largely mechanical—products of the temper of the times—measures of the density of public pressure.

The beneficial action of a Government of disturbance, is, on the whole, questionable. It is not the business of a Government (so, at least, it seems to me, who am not a politician)—it is not its business to initiate reforms; and a strong Government is naturally averse to change.

Unless, therefore, the inconvenience from which the body politic suffers be strongly marked—if the public mind has not formed a decided opinion on the question—the instinctive object of a Commission will be to soothe, and it will naturally be formed of calm experienced men, with just a flavour of officialism about them.

If, however, agitation has assumed a decided aspect; if in its swelling course it has educated the masses to look for relief from special modifications already shadowed forth, then the Commission will be very differently constructed, but as instinctively as in the first case; and we shall find upon it, men of pronounced opinions, and some with the spirit and genius of reform.

It will go deep into the matter, and will send up ore, which by-and-by will be fashioned into the new machinery.

A Commission of Inquiry into the Poor Law, Ireland, has lately sat, and made its report; and because I have it in hands to show, that we cannot receive that report as a solution of the question—because I purpose, in its proper place, analyzing and commenting on the composition, the course of action, and the results of that Commission, I have made the foregoing remarks. I hope to disarm antagonism, and to pursue the tenor of my way without offending either the members of the late Commission, or the Government which appointed them. A celebrated divine once said, that “a spoonful of honey will catch more flies than a barrel of vinegar;” and I wish to make friends for my cause.

The matter the Commission had to do with has nothing sensational about it. It was a matter of small savings, and, to the general world, of uninteresting people. It is one in which the public mind, though dimly conscious of wrong, has not as yet manifested an absorbing interest, hence the incompleteness of the labours of the Commission, the unsatisfactory nature of its report.

I hope to do somewhat in stimulating the public mind to a right appreciation of the really important problems which lie behind the question of amalgamation of Unions.

I desire to show that aid can be, and ought to be, brought closer to the doors of the poor.

I desire to show that relief can be given to the ratepayers—in the first place, by a diminution in the number of expensive establishments; in the second, by a better and more rational system of management.

I desire to show how the present anomalous system of representation can be purified and improved, and how these several things can be done without dislocation of the poor law system; and how, by simple expedients, and here is my ambition, these things may be made to commend themselves to persons of every form of religious belief, of every political complexion.

Last, not least, I purpose calling attention to the unwise system of treatment under which our workhouse children suffer, to our loss in pocket, to theirs in body and soul.

CHAPTER II.

AMALGAMATION OF UNIONS.

THREE leading features come into view when we approach the consideration of this subject.

1. The size of the country.
2. The amount of housing power existing in our workhouses.
3. The number of paupers who may require house room.

With regard to the size of the country, we must first of all fix in our

minds what is the area which best reconciles *humanity* to the poor, with *justice* to the ratepayers.

In the map which is to be found at the beginning of this pamphlet, the site of each workhouse is marked,* together with a circle round each, drawn with a radius of fifteen statute miles. It is not that I am prepared to recommend an area of that size, but that I desired a standard of comparison, which would not be held to be unreasonably large; and as under present circumstances there are nine portions of the mainland which lie outside those circles—two in Donegal, two in Mayo, three in Galway, one in Clare, and one in Kerry (marked in the map by shading), it cannot be maintained that such an area is unduly large for the purposes for which I use it.

I have come to the conclusion that forty-nine workhouses ought to be closed; and I arrive at that conclusion in the following way. It appears to me that the five large Urban Districts—North and South Dublin, Belfast, Cork, and Limerick—should be left undisturbed and unaffected by the suggested change; that on account of their remoteness, and the difficulties created by the configuration of coast line, the following nine Rural Districts should be undisturbed—namely, Dunfanaghy, Glenties, Belmullet, Clifden, Tralee, Dingle, Cahirciveen, Castletown (Berehaven), Skull.† Deducting the areas of these districts from the general area of the country, it appears that the country can be divided into one hundred areas, smaller than eighteen of those now existing. If then, it be contended, that such areas are too large on the score of humanity, clearly the charge of inhumanity lies at our door already, and we ought to be setting about increasing, instead of diminishing the number of houses.

It will not be contended that we should do so, and I do not see, therefore, that it can seriously be alleged, that an area of the size I mention is too large. The selection of such an area admits of forty-nine houses being closed. The size would be a trifle over 184,000 statute acres; and supposing it to be a square, the diagonal would be twenty-four statute miles long; that is to say, the distance from the centre to the furthest point of such area, would be twelve statute miles.

If the argument derived from area stood alone, and it does not stand alone, I do not see that it is one that an opponent can afford to despise. I reinforce it by the argument derived from numbers. A parliamentary return called for during the last session by Mr. Moore, the member for Clonmel, informs us that the housing powers of the workhouses of Ireland, stands at 147,222, and that the number of inmates was 43,632.

If the correctness of this return were to pass unchallenged, I need say no more, and that part of my argument derived from numbers would have to be conceded as complete.

But Major Trench's Commission does deny its correctness, and sets the housing power of our workhouses much lower—namely, at from 40 to 50 per cent. less—(page xvi, par. 6, Report and Evidence Poor Law Union Inquiry).

In this conflict of official opinion, I do not know why we should

* Except the two Dublin ones.

† Skull might receive paupers from other Unions.

reject the figures of the Local Government Board, and accept those of the Commission as absolutely correct.

From theory I appeal to facts. It was a fact, at the time of issue of the Parliamentary return made out by the Local Government Board, that the two Dublin houses contained 4,634 inmates.

For the sake of argument I will concede, that at that time they were just full. The Local Government Board says they could have held 1,261 more, as it estimates their capacity at 5,895. But if the Local Government Board erred in this respect, we have in the number 1,261 a measure of its error. In making out its return, it had the same standard of capacity for one house as for another; for the whole of the Unions, as for the two Dublin ones.

Applying, then, this measure of error to the rest of the houses, by a rule-of-three sum it follows, that the actual capacity of the Irish work houses must be admitted to stand at 115,558. Applying this calculation merely to the 149 houses affected by my scheme, it appears that whilst at the date of the return they were called on to house 32,129, the number they could have housed was 99,468. Half that capacity would prove my case.*

If this train of reasoning be objected to by the Commissioners, or by any one else, the following awkward alternatives present themselves. Either the Dublin Guardians, with the connivance of the Local Government Board, had, at the date of that return, overcrowded their wards to the danger of the well-being of the inmates; or the Local Government Board had played fast and loose with Parliament in its official return.

With such alternatives in view, I do not hesitate to affirm, that my figures will be accepted, as preferable to the calculations of the Commissions of Inquiry, supposing those of the Local Government Board to be exaggerated. Calculating from area, I proposed to diminish the number of houses by 49; but if numbers alone could decide the question, we could decrease them by more than double that number. It appears to me that my argument from area is fairly reinforced, and the moderation of my proposal sufficiently established.

Of course, a large measure of reduction is not to be run away with by argument like this, irresistibly strong as it may be, without hearing the difficulties and objections, real and imaginary, which may be set up. I have it much at heart to set them forth in their strongest light, that I may demolish them the more completely. In the next chapter I will enumerate and examine them. But before doing so, I will ask the reader to take a look at the map opposite the title page.

If nothing more could be said for amalgamation than what that map says, would it not be almost enough?

Look at the bewildering way in which the lines cross and re-cross each other, as at railway junctions near some large city. Observe the extraordinary variety of treatment which the country has received; the apparently unaccountable difference of size in the areas of relief. If the inland district of which Edenderry (King's) is the centre can do with one workhouse, why do the Kells (Meath) and Cootehill (Cavan) dis-

* According to the report itself, the admitted accommodation stood at from 73,000 to 78,000; say 90 per cent. over our requirements.

tricts require respectively six and seven? Compare Larne in the North, alone in its glory, with Clonakilty in the South, one of three; population will not explain it, neither will valuation. The paupers of Clonakilty, Dunmanway, and Bandon could find refuge in any one of those three houses, and the valuation of Larne is in round numbers £20,000 over the highest valued of those three Cork districts, and so the greater expense has been thrown where it can least be borne. Having thus gone from North to South, go now from East to West, compare the district of which Rathdrum in Wicklow is the centre with that surrounding Innistymon in Clare, still a similar story. Take compass in hand, and satisfy yourself that there are some fifty workhouses, possibly more, within ten statute miles of each other. Does it not look, as if in defiance of common sense, and totally irrespective of popular requirements, workhouses had been built up merely to utilise vacant sites?

CHAPTER III.

OBJECTIONS DETAILED AND ANSWERED.

The objections to amalgamation will be found resolvable into these three:—

1. That an enlargement of areas would add to the inconvenience to which the poor are subjected.
2. That it would lead to increased difficulties in management, and consequently to increased expense.
3. That the saving to be effected would be very small, and on the whole not worth the at least temporary friction which any change of system would entail.

With each objection changes can be rung on the peal, but there are only three bells to play on after all.

I will give some of the chief variations.

It will be said, you cannot divide the country into squares mathematically equal in extent; topography, the facility or difficulty of intercommunication, different densities of population, will assert their claims; moreover, if you could divide the country by pencil and rule, the workhouses retained will not be found in the precise centre of the new areas.

All that is true, and I find in its truth a valuable auxiliary in supporting a proposition which I have elsewhere been at some trouble in endeavouring to establish, and one which has been entirely overlooked by the late commission. The question of amalgamation, that is to say, the arrangement and inter-relation of areas, is not one to be studied here and there, to be applied to this or that locality, but it is one which must be studied with a view to the wants of the whole country. It must be settled in Dublin, but applied in the provinces.

A general scheme having been at least sketched out if not matured, it

would doubtless be expedient to correct and test it, by the peculiar circumstances of the particular districts affected, but to commence the inquiry without a general pre-arranged plan, is simply to go in quest of confusion.

For instance, the smallness of a Union is not of itself a sufficient reason why it should be swallowed up by some one or more larger ones; it might happen that the opposite course would be attended with more general advantage. But if, without showing that the proposed arrangement was but a detail of some widely-reaching scheme, it was proposed that a Union of some size should be merged in smaller ones, the proposition would be scouted, and properly so, as absurd and ill-considered.

Neither again is the good or the bad management of this or that Union a matter to be allowed the very smallest weight, any more than the feelings or wishes of this or that Board of Guardians.

If in the general interests of the country it be considered advisable to divide one or more well and economically managed Unions, amongst others not so happily managed, it is a reason and a good one for looking closely into the management which has produced undesirable results, and for compelling the adoption of that economy of management, which the absorbed Unions have shewn to be possible, but it is no reason for maintaining houses which have been found unnecessary, and the cost of keeping up which is, therefore, clearly so much public money misapplied.

If, again, it is maintained, as it may be with some show of reason, that a given Union which has few what are called Union charges, will, by being annexed to one which is liable to many such, be made to participate in burdens from which it has hitherto been happily free, what is this but to say, that an equalization of taxation will be brought about, and that those who have been hitherto weighed down by unfair because unequal pressure, will have help brought to them in bearing the burden. This is an objection, which, one can readily imagine, would have much weight in isolated localities which a proposed change would disagreeably affect. But in its application to the general question of amalgamation, it seems to me an argument for rather than against.

Whether what is called Union charges should or should not be relieved out of a fund raised from the country at large, is an interesting question, but one which would, by side issues, draw me away from the subject in hand, already sufficiently complicated.

(a).—Effect of Increased Areas on the Poor.

The poorest objection, perhaps, that can be made is, that in the new areas, the workhouse would be found away from the centre, and that there would be thus, a certain part of the population left at an extreme distance from relief.

A look at the map will show, that if you subtract 49 from the 149 districts which my plan would affect, you cannot possibly, by any reasonable re-allocation of areas, leave the houses retained so far apart as to produce real inconvenience. If in a given selected area of the size I speak of, the workhouse is found too far removed from the centre of the new district, all that is required to be done is to rearrange, so as to curtail the district on the side required, and extend it in some other direc-

tion. It would be absurd to suppose that in any four adjacent areas, the four workhouses would be situated at the four extreme angles.

A more direct application of this first and principal objection, which I am engaged in considering, is, that an increased area would lead to increased inconvenience, if not suffering, to the poor, by increasing the distance between them and State aid.

If a workhouse which is half a mile from a poor person, were removed from him a quarter of a mile, or he from it, he would be exposed to an increase of inconvenience; but as in justice to the ratepayers, a certain amount of inconvenience to the poor must be tolerated, the question of inconvenience is one to be considered not absolutely but relatively.

There are a great many very excellent persons in the world who are what is called one-idea men. They press their views with much fervour, and succeed in introducing into the affairs of the world a good deal of confusion. A great many humanitarians are one-idea men. Such will look on the proposition to increase the areas of relief, possibly with some heat.

I cannot myself realize that idea of humanity to the pauper which excludes the idea of justice to the ratepayer. It is too often the case in this country, that the chief difference between the payer and the receiver of Poor-rates, is that the first is expected to pay his debts and the other is not. There is no reason why mercy and justice should be divorced.

But as the increase of area will create some difference, let us attempt to measure that difference, and estimate the number of persons who will be affected by it.

The extent of the inconvenience, that is to say, the increased mileage, has its measure already in the size of the proposed areas already indicated; and that being so, each reader will reason on it for himself, according to his own idea.

I may, however, remind him, that as I have already pointed out, 18 of our present areas are already larger than the size which I recommend as suitable. The number of persons that would be affected is the more important consideration; and to narrow the question at once, I proceed to show those who would not be affected.

While advocating the closing of 49 houses, which I do because they are not required and cost money, I do not advocate the doing away with a single Board of Guardians or their relieving officers. The Board of Guardians costs nothing, and the work the relieving officers do cannot be dispensed with. Not only should the Board of Guardians be left unreduced in numbers, but I advocate their being multiplied, so as to have one for each dispensary district. It would be an incalculable advantage to the poor to have their wants inquired into in 720 centres instead of as now in 163. (There are, I believe, 720 dispensary districts). Thus, the extension of areas, would not affect, except for good, one of that class which now obtains out-door relief, neither would those attacked by temporary illnesses be affected, for it is part of my scheme that there should be no diminution in the number of fever hospitals, dispensaries, or medical staffs.

The actual inmates of the 49 workhouses closed, and the class from which they are recruited, would then alone be exposed to any inconvenience such as we ought to consider.

It is possible to estimate their numbers sufficiently close for practical purposes.

The houses closed would certainly not be those at present most numerously filled,* and as I find, according to the Parliamentary return (see Appendix F) already quoted, that 81 Unions—I may say half of the whole—had less than 201 inmates, I may assume, without risk of cavil, that if I allow an average of 200 inmates a piece for the Unions to be closed, I shall have assumed as affected by the reduction, a number very much larger than really would be affected. The generosity of my admission will be appreciated by anyone who will turn to Appendix F.

The number on this assumption would stand at 9,800. Of these some 718 would be harmless lunatics or imbeciles (Appendix G), and the number of children under 15 years of age would be 2,936. The number of adults affected by the change who are sound at least in mind, would then be 6,146. I gather from page 144 of the annual report for 1876 of the Local Government Board, that out of the number of children I have indicated, 1,069 would be illegitimate, and I deduce from that comparison the probable conclusion that out of the 6,146 adults some 712 would be women having one or more illegitimate children. I do not apprehend that the views of impure women as to what is a conveniently sized area would be taken into account. The number of adult persons then, whose views as to the increased areas (limited as I have shown that area to be) should be considered by us, appears to be 5,434. The inconvenience to which they would be subjected is of a two-fold nature. In the first place there is the distance which once, or twice, possibly oftener, they would have to travel to seek shelter; secondly, the distance interposed between them and their friends; that is to say, the limitation as to visits. In estimating these inconveniences I think it right to exclude from consideration children and imbeciles. The inconvenience of having to travel a mile or two extra, is not one which should be allowed in any case to militate against the just interests—I may call them the just rights—of the ratepayers in the case of either child or adult, and with regard to visits of friends, whilst I by no means dispute that the imbecile, as well as the child, can derive pleasure from the visits of friends, yet the nature of both imbecile and child is such that the interruption or entire cessation of such visits would not create pain.

Thus we are compelled to fall back upon the following as the question to be resolved, whether in order that 5,434 paupers may receive the visits of their friends, without further inconvenience than exists at present, 49 otherwise useless houses are to be kept up.

Whether it be just to the ratepayers to increase the attractions which for many the workhouses, as indubitably as unfortunately, possess, by

* Nevertheless, the assumption made in the report of the Commission (page xxiv, paragraph 3) that “if amalgamation was considered advisable the Unions which would be selected for extinction must *necessarily* (my Italics) be those which are least in area,” is perfectly gratuitous, and quite contrary to good policy. As an example, suppose the choice lay between Ballina and Killala, in Mayo, it is obvious that Ballina, which is the larger by 45,533 acres, should be extinguished rather than Killala, and no one will pretend that Killala could not accommodate one third of those who now have recourse to Ballina. (See Appendix F.)

facilitating the visits of friends, is not a point which I am now considering; I am endeavouring rather to estimate the numbers who would be affected by the changes I suggest, and the extent to which they would be affected.

The number, then, whose cases we should consider, I have shown to be 5,434.* Now if we bear in mind the size of the area which I have proposed, and the fact that a very large number of our workhouses are within 10 statute miles of each other, the increased distances which this body of pauperism would have to divide between them would range from 5 to 12 statute miles.

Thus, by the proposed change, throughout Ireland less than 700 poor persons would find the full distance 12 miles interposed between themselves and their friends.†

And let it be borne in mind that the largest portion of this class are persons who have reduced themselves to this extremity by extravagance, carelessness, idleness, or vice.

Is this to hold the balance between justice on one side—humanity on the other? Is this using the ratepayer's money with the economy to which he is absolutely entitled?

But I may be told that in the interest of the poor the slightest increase of difficulty must be avoided, because already there are many of the poor whose hatred of these workhouses is so intense that they would sooner die than enter them. It seems to me that such an objection is like "vaulting ambition which overleaps itself and falls on the other" (side). A class which, as things now are, would sooner die than enter the house, would in no way be affected by the increase of area, though they might derive help from the multiplication of centres of relief.

But is it not in a Christian country a thing to be deplored, that the system of relief should have that about it as to cause a single being to prefer starvation to receiving it on the terms offered? When we recollect who was the founder of the Christian dispensation, and in what guise he walked the earth, does it not show a perverse ingenuity to have succeeded, as we have done, in branding poverty, not by discrimination of cause, but as mere poverty—as something to be contemned and spurned at?

When we consider the mixed company which we have gathered together for entertainment in these bleak and whitened halls, have we not reason to thank God that there are men and women who would sooner die than enter them?

* It is, of course, impossible to give an estimate of the numbers affected which would defy cavil, inasmuch as I am dealing with a fluctuating population. This difficulty does not, however, sensibly affect the value of my argument, which consists in showing the extremely limited number of those, inconvenience to whom is sought to be measured. Thus to those whose residence in the workhouse is of a temporary character a mile or two more or less interposed between their late homes and their present residence would not create a serious inconvenience. (I see the report notices this difficulty. There is not much in it; what there is I may have an opportunity of examining later.

† This, probably, is too large an estimate, inasmuch as the further you go from industrial centres, such as are all towns, whether manufacturing or not, the less dense becomes the population.

Never should we rest satisfied till a free use of the fan and sieve, and some energetic attempt at classification, has separated the discordant elements, and made the acceptance of Poor Law shelter to honest poor something less bitter than death.

(b) *The Effect of Increased Areas on Management.*

The second objection is, that the distances which the Guardians would have to travel being greater, their attendance would become more fitful, and in consequence steadiness in the system of management would become impaired, with unfortunate results, both to ratepayer and pauper.

Furthermore, that if the houses be diminished in number, and the present electoral divisions retained, the numbers of members of the several Boards would be increased, and that thus again the stability of management would be impaired and its difficulties much added to.

These, no doubt, are real evils ; fortunately by a very simple plan they may be surmounted. Let the houses be managed by Committees ; each affiliated Board of Guardians nominating from amongst themselves members not exceeding one-fourth of their numbers to sit on that Committee.

Let this Committee have for sole duty, the finance departments, the management of the houses, and the conducting of the correspondence.

Let the Boards of Guardians, one in each dispensary district, have for their duties, the enquiring into the cases of the poor, and the giving of orders for admission to the house, or out-door relief, as might seem to them good, fixing the areas of chargeability.

The Boards of Guardians at present fulfil these joint duties, which may with perfect convenience, and with undoubted economical results, be discharged by two separate bodies, mutually responsible to each other, to the country, and to the Local Government Board.

The plan is a very simple one, and it is difficult to imagine an objection to it which is not traceable to selfish motives.

It constitutes a departure, no doubt, from present practice, but it recognises and fulfils every principle sanctioned by the present system.

In its proper place at page 20 I discuss the reasons which induce me to recommend the management by Committees as preferable in many ways to the present system.

(c) *The Objection derived from the smallness of the proposed Saving.*

Here, indeed, is my weak point. Let it be shown that a Government can rightly and without imprudence impose upon us taxation amounting to one farthing, for which it can show no necessity whatever, then indeed I have nothing to say why a taxation which I cannot show to exceed a penny should not be maintained, although its uselessness can clearly be demonstrated.

But if on the other hand it cannot be shown that the smallness of the sum would justify the State in inflicting useless taxation, I do not see that the smallness of the saving I have to speak of is any argument for its retention.

I calculate it at £43,000 a year, and my calculation is based on the following data—

It being no part of my plan to say what workhouses should be closed, I clearly can give no figures which cannot be impugned, and if it was part of my plan to specify the workhouses which should be closed, I have no right or power of access to their books. All I could do was to go to that workhouse* where I have right of inspection; to show what would be the saving if that workhouse were closed, and to multiply that total by 49, the number of the houses which it is my contention can be done away with.

There is nothing special in this workhouse which should cause its being objected to on the ground of its not giving a fair basis for an average calculation. The inmates according to the Parliamentary return stood for the year 1876 at 251; the average weekly cost is set down at a high figure—4s. 3½d.; but there are nine others where the weekly cost is higher, and of these seven have a smaller number of inmates. There is one peculiarity, however, to which I call attention, and that is that this house is under rent.

This, however, is not a reason for objecting to its being taken as a basis of calculation, because in other houses where there is no rent to be saved there is the value of the fee-simple, which, if funded, might be a source of yearly income. In arranging for the changes suggested, an arrangement might also be made, if necessary, by Act of Parliament, for funding such sources of income.

Leaving then out of consideration the fever hospitals, dispensaries, and medical staff, which my scheme proposes to leave intact, the saving would be as under—

Clerk, £130; Chaplains, £85; Master, £87; Matron, £55; Porter, £38; annual repairs, £80; stationery, £54; light, £19; fuel, £250; rent, £48 12s. 8d.; insurance, £11; taxes, £2 5s.

Annual interest on funded value of materials if sold, £15, giving a total of £874 17s. 8d., which multiplied by 49 gives a general total of £42,899 5s. 8d.—say in round numbers £43,000 a year.

I have known an attempt made to weaken the effect of the saving which can be shown as resulting from a serious process of amalgamation, by representing that a considerable portion of the savings would be swallowed up, at any rate at the outset of the change, by the necessity of giving pensions to the officers dismissed.

It is difficult to imagine a more futile objection. I might have used the question of pensions, to strengthen my argument, by showing that the pension list has become a permanent feature in our expenditure, and that to reduce the sources of that expenditure by 49 is of itself an important saving. But whilst I make no use of that fact to strengthen my argument, I wish to point out that the united expense of these pensions would very soon entirely disappear.

* Roscommon.

These officials may be looked upon as officers not only of the particular houses they serve, but as officers of the system at large. So long as they are not entitled to retirement from length of service, or disability, I see no reason why they should not be called on in any part of Ireland, to fill an office similar to that which they lately held, whenever a vacancy should occur, and upon their accepting or declining such office, their pensions in virtue of disestablishment would cease. Of course it would be only fair, to allow these gentlemen to commute for a sum not exceeding a certain number of years full pay, according to a scale which might be drawn up for the purpose. A large number would commute, and this extra pension list would soon become a blank sheet.

CHAPTER IV.

MANAGEMENT BY BOARDS AND BY COMMITTEES COMPARED.

That the system of management by Committees suggested at page 18 would result in a considerable saving in the rates, and lead to a more humane and paternal treatment of the pauper inmates, is not a matter susceptible of direct and positive proof. The most that can be done is to give the reasons there are for such expectation, leaving the reader to apply the reasoning and judge for himself. The present system cannot be called business-like, or even commonly intelligent.

It will not be denied, that where irresponsible persons have their hands in the pockets of the public, public expenditure is apt to exceed that which is necessary.

Now Poor Law Guardians are practically irresponsible. They consist of two elements, the *ex-officio* and the elected class.

Take first the *ex-officio* Guardian. To whom is he responsible for the manner in which he executes his duties as a Poor Law Guardian? He is not bound to execute them at all. No one can compel him to do so. He is not even a Guardian by his own consent. He is one, whether he likes it or not, simply because he is possessed of a certain amount of property, and happens to be in the commission of the peace. There is no responsibility here, and one half at least of the Board is thus clearly irresponsible.

Take now the elected element—

In rural districts, to which most of my remarks apply, land is much subdivided, the mass of the electors are persons of uncultivated minds, and considerably inferior in mental power to those they are called upon to elect as Guardians. They do not know, they have no means of knowing, and if they did know they could not judge, how far the conduct of their representative is calculated to affect their interests.

In the case of a Member of Parliament, hundreds of papers, thousands of people, watch and comment on his conduct, and do all they can to bring home to every fireside their view of his conduct. No such thing

occurs in the case of the Poor Law Guardian. In perhaps a majority of cases, and unless in the chief towns of counties, what he does is not even noticed in the local papers (unless some sensational matter is introduced, having no relation to the Poor Law) ; and if it were, very few of the electors read the local papers.

Thus, having no one to take him to task, not only does the Guardian find himself practically irresponsible, but the elector comes to acquiesce in that irresponsibility.

Who ever heard of a rural Guardian being interfered with by his constituents for anything he had done, or omitted to do, in reference to the Poor Law Act? The grounds upon which a Poor Law Guardian is elected are, that he is of the right religion, that his political views have the proper hue, that he is an employer of labour, that he is otherwise popular, everything is or may be taken into account, excepting always his competence to assist in the administration of the Poor Law.

One of the most painstaking and intelligent Guardians I ever knew, and a most regular attendant, was removed, simply because he was a Protestant, and possibly a conservative, to make way for a Catholic, and, I suppose, a liberal, who attended the Board in the year ending March, 1877, three times, and during the subsequent year not at all. He had taken the measure of his constituency, which is, I believe, well pleased with him.

To all this practical irresponsibility there are two checks on which reliance is placed ; let us see upon what grounds—

First of all the control of the Local Government Board. This department of Government is clearly responsible for the application of the law to the poor. It sees that such treatment as society deems applicable to the poor is duly administered, and under its direction no scandals can occur, beyond those which society has become accustomed to and tolerates. (See two last chapters).

But between the Local Government Board and the unfortunate ratepayer, the Guardians interpose and shield, not the ratepayer, but the Local Government Board. Theoretically it is the duty of the Guardians to take care of the ratepayer, and unless some very glaring abuse is sought to be perpetrated, it would be somewhat quixotic of the Local Government Board to interfere, and very naturally it largely abstains from interference.

The second supposed check, namely, the self-interest of the Guardians, who share in the payment of the tax, is of little more value than the other supposed check, rather indeed is it of less value.

No man is insensible to the pleasure of being thought generous, of being a munificent rewarder of faithful services. When a question arises between a distant contractor and a local trader, it is sweet and seems wise to encourage local trade. When our hands are in other people's pockets, the tendency we experience towards exercising generous virtues is really very strong. Neither thought nor trouble is required, merely a vote. How can a Guardian resist the pressure of another Guardian to raise this or that salary? and the raising of salaries is contagious. The effect of our expenditure is not immediately felt, it

is not traceable to any one vote, or to any one man ; the effect on the pocket of each individual Guardian is a matter of shillings, rather than of pounds, of pence probably, rather than of either, and so the ball increases in volume as it rolls along ; the rates rise, and the ratepayer groans.

It is hard to blame the Guardian ; the attendance of Guardians is very uncertain and desultory. The most intelligent may labour to establish a policy, but he can have no reasonable certainty that an irruption of unexpected members, or members got together for a factious purpose—brought in not to discuss, but to vote—may not in a moment upset his calculations, or undo his labours. Not only is this so, but the policy of one meeting may be overthrown by the very next but one.

Not only is this instability and want of responsibility an evident and sufficient reason for the rates being higher than they need be, but it has a worse effect on the relations between the pauper and the Guardian. Theoretically the Guardians have an almost unlimited power for good. The sick come to them to be cured, the infirm to be strengthened, the imbecile to have infused into them some glimmer of intellectual light, the distressed to be cheered, warmed, and comforted ; the child to be reared to a useful manhood or womanhood. What a beautiful vista of usefulness is here pointed out, and all these things—theoretically at least, might be done under the Poor Law System ; and, under the present system of management, it has resolved itself practically into a mere question of stomachs and backs, and the keeping the flickering flame of animal life from becoming extinct.

The doing successfully of any one of these bright things would require a patient, persistent, intelligent policy ; and how can such a policy be aimed at where intelligence is at a discount, responsibility does not really exist, and patient persistence is impossible ?

If there could be infused into the body which has the spending of the public money, a sense of responsibility—if it could be induced to be regular in attendance, to work harmoniously, patiently, and persistently, towards the establishing and carrying out of a definite policy, having in view the necessities of the poor, the interests of the ratepayer, and the good of the state—

If to guide, counsel, and watch over this body, we had alongside of it some other body which would be competent to fulfil these duties, and which itself removed from temptation, would find it alike its interest and its pleasure to fulfil them, what a very different story we should soon have to tell in the diminution of rates, of misery, and of pauperism.

A very simple expedient appears to me calculated, without any dislocation of the present system, if not to secure these results to the full, at least to make an enormous stride in that direction.

Dissociate the Boards of Guardians from all powers of management of or interference in the workhouses ; let the governing and directing body be a Committee, few in number, of members, taken from the Boards of Guardians, and appointed by them.

To ensure a policy of some intelligence, and therefore of some stability, it is absolutely essential that the tenure of office of the Committeemen, still more the tenure of office of Poor Law Guardian, should be of more extended duration than at present.

Whatever may be said in favour of annual elections of members of Parliament there is nothing but the merest theory in favour of annual elections of Poor Law Guardians. The application of money to the necessities of the pauper is not a matter which, like politics, admits of change from one year to another ; hence, in the election of Poor Law Guardians, unless some change is brought about by matters outside Poor Law considerations, we find the same men walking into the board-room year after year. But the mere fact of the shortness of their legal tenure of office deprives them of interest in a defined system of management, which they otherwise might have.

The Committees, therefore, should be elected by the Guardians for a term of not less than two years, and the Guardians be elected by the people for a term of not less than three.

To create a further sense of stability, without in any way interfering with the rights of the electors, it might be arranged that only one half of the Boards of Guardians should vacate office at the same time, and that the elections should take place every eighteen months.

Of course it might thus happen, that a Committee-man, after sitting as such for six months, might lose his seat on the Poor Law Board, and consequently with it his seat on Committee. The disturbance in the management thus created would be of small importance, and quickly appeased by the election of a new Committee-man.

By such a system of management as I have described the sense of responsibility, such as it is, which the Guardians at present have to the ratepayer, would remain unimpaired, altered merely to this extent, that he would have recourse to his constituents for their approval every three years instead of annually.

Inasmuch as only half of the Board would expire at the one time the Board would never become extinct, and a sense of stability of management, now much wanted, would be created. Details as to the duration of the offices of chairman, etc., could be left to the Local Government Board.

The power of criticism of the Board or Boards of Guardians connected with any one house over its Committee of Management would be sufficiently powerful for practical purposes.

Every two years this Committee would be appointed, and every two years it would return to the Boards which created it for re-appointment or dismissal. To this Committee would be relegated all questions of finance and management, the Board or Boards of Guardians reserving to themselves exclusively and solely the inquiry into the wants of the poor, giving orders in accordance with such inquiry.

The Committee-men would retain their seats at the Boards of Guardians, compelled if required, and on pain of loss of office, to meet their fellow Guardians there ; and, whether required or not, attending there in the discharge, like their fellows, of the duties of the office of Guardian.

Through their Committee Members, or through the Relieving Officers, or through the Local Government Board, the Boards of Guardians would have ample means of impressing on the Committees of Management their views as to the general policy or course in detail, which was being carried out.

Having no power of expenditure these Boards of Guardians would be pure and jealous critics of any act of the Committee tending to increase

the expenditure. These Boards are now considered competent to direct the management, and the loss of power to manage would bring with it no loss of power of criticism—rather it would point and intensify it.

Boards of Guardians as at present constituted—at any rate the elected part—consist of representative men—men, generally speaking, of business habits and general intelligence. That they are not equal to the direction of our workhouses is, amongst other reasons, because such direction in its possible perfection is an extremely delicate matter, requiring not a general but a special intelligence. These men, however, hold a very proud position in their localities, and as they seldom relinquish it without a contest I conclude they value it as they ought.

Men elected by them to do the work they have been in the habit of doing—work which, no doubt, each Guardian thinks himself perfectly competent to perform—would have a double *prestige*, and they would value their appointment accordingly.

Being, as they should be, few in number, and appointed to a position of considerable power and influence, their appointment would be looked upon with some jealousy by their fellow Guardians, and their actions would be sharply criticized. Not only would the best men be appointed, but those only would be selected who could and would attend.

Liabie every week at the meetings of the general boards, to be questioned as to their work in committee, to have their actions commented on, and, at the end of their term, liable to the confusion of loss of office, the feeling of responsibility would never be allowed for a moment to flag.

Being few in number, selected for their intelligence, with considerable present, and still greater prospective, hold of office, they would be able to plan and carry out a steady and well-defined policy, having for its aims a serious and hopeful struggle with pauperism, and the interests of the ratepayers present and future.

For further details as to the scheme see the next chapter but one.

CHAPTER V.

ON THE CONSTITUTION OF OUR POOR LAW BOARDS, ETC.

CHANGE SUGGESTED.

THE principle which was kept in view in arranging our Poor Law Boards, as at present constituted, is evident. One half the Board was to represent numbers, the other half was to represent property.

The completeness of the arrangements devised for preventing either half of the Board, doing that for which it was apparently constituted, is as remarkable as ingenious.

To begin with the elected Guardians:—

Their representation of numbers is affected, but not improperly so, by

the social influence of the local magnate, but it is liable to be vitiated by giving the landlords a plurality of votes. It would seem that the Legislature had been actuated by some such feeling as that which influenced Fear in Collins' celebrated ode :—

“First its hand, its skill to try,
Amid the chords bewildered laid;
And back recoiled, it knew not why,
E'en at the sound itself had made.”

The effect of plural voting is, in some cases, to neutralize; in some cases positively to over-ride popular representation—in all cases giving opportunity to raise a popular cry against landlord privileges.

If the general result in the administration of the Poor Law was to give property a predominance of power, a great many would, no doubt, be quite satisfied with the result, and might find in the existence of such power, sufficient salve for any inconvenience which popular anger might occasion.

But as the balance of absurdity appears to have been held with a pretty even hand, and the representation of property as completely muddled as the democratic representation, the equality of the two halves of the Board, taking the country from one end to the other, is probably pretty fairly established. Not that in any one Union throughout the country the democratic and the property representation are equal in power, or fairly represented, because I believe such equality, that is to say, the equality which the principle of the Act seems to have aimed at, nowhere exists. But I mean, that if in one half the country the representatives of property rule the roast, the democratic representatives rule it in the other half. Thus, in one and the same province, I know of a Board which obsequiously obeys the rule of one man; and in another place I have seen the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and Deputy Vice-Chairman resign their seats, and retire in disgust, within a few minutes of each other, because a demagogue insisted on bringing in matter which was offensive to the ex-officio element, and had nothing whatever to say to the proper business of the Board.

The equality which exists, is not then a balance of power, but a balance of inequality, and a state of general muddle and confusion, equally distributed.

I have explained how the representation of number has been turned topsy turvy; I proceed to do as much by the property representation.

The gentlemen who, in equal numbers, sit, or have a right to sit, as ex-officio members, are gentlemen who have a certain property qualification in the Union, and are acting magistrates for no matter what county; it does not in the least matter whether they are competent to act or not, whether they are willing to act or not, or where they reside; whether they are within or without 200 miles of the Board-room where they have a right to sit, there they are—will he, nill he—ex-officio Guardians; and so long as they are so, no one else may occupy their seat.

It does not appear to depend upon their pleasure, or on the pleasure of any living being. There appear to be only four ways in which they can get rid of the office—giving up the commission of the peace, selling their property, suicide, or exile.

I question whether the law ever before created a more extraordinary position.

Those who have the right to an ex-officio seat, but are unable, or unwilling to occupy it, value it just as they value any other right they may have, and would object to losing it. But they cannot retain it, without prejudice to the representation of property, and to the general well-being.

Thus, retention of a right which they do not exercise, prevents the voice of property being heard, and the exercise of that legitimate influence which it ought to exercise.

In places where, from absence of many of its members, the ex-officio element is weak, the remainder of that body cease to take that interest in the affairs of the Union which it is desirable they should take.

The elected element taken from a stratum of society, which, usually, must perforce stay at home, is always either present in the Board-room or, producible, if required; and where it ceases to meet a corresponding number of the ex-officio element, it considers itself, and not unnaturally, as the whole Board, and the administration of the Poor Law comes to be, in such districts, a class administration, a result which has, for all concerned, a very pernicious tendency.

If, then, it be deemed advisable that in the Board-room numbers and property should be equally represented, I cannot understand why such a result should not be brought about by positive direct means, which would recommend themselves to practical men of business, rather than by perverse and preposterous ingenuity, such as I have been describing.

The representation of both classes requires to be simplified, purified, and made effective.

For the representation of numbers, give equal voting power to all now qualified, allowing no man more than one vote, and that only for the place where he resides.

Why should property fear the people, or why should the people fear property? Whatever demagogues for selfish purposes may say, there is no real antagonism possible between them. Having, by the arrangement suggested, made the popular representation effective, let as much be done for property. Let us avoid dumb show; let us get rid of ex-officio members. Substitute for them men elected by persons having a certain property qualification in the Union—say £100 a-year freehold, and £300 a-year leasehold. For property representation, plurality of voting is essential. Thus, for double the qualification, give two votes; for thrice, three votes; and so on, up to such limits as might be agreed on. Let the candidature and voting be for the whole Union, according to the property held in it, limiting to each voter the number of candidates for whom he could vote, but with that precaution, allowing him to split his votes or not, as he thought proper. With such a constituency the representatives would require no qualification, except the votes of their constituents.

By such a system, something real, something harmonious, would have been established, and the tone, and peace, and order, and weight, and capacity for business of every Poor Law Board in the country, would be immeasurably raised.

Instead of a balance of inequality as now, we should rise to a balance

of equality, and of harmonious action. I believe that Boards so formed, would command so much confidence, that by-and-by, by universal consent, their Committees would acquire the conduct of the domestic and municipal business of the country; and that in this direction, some of the political aspirations of the hour would find a pacific, true, and useful solution.

CHAPTER VI.

RECAPITULATION.

I have now bit by bit sketched out the reform of the Poor Law system, which I have had in my mind, as being applicable to our present needs, which seems to me to contain the maximum of good, together with a minimum of disturbance. Let me collect the scattered fragments.

(a)—*Re-allotment of Areas.*

Leaving undisturbed 14 of the present areas with their workhouses, 49 of the remaining houses should be closed,* leaving to be re-allocated 149 areas, which would centre round the 100 houses to be retained.

The administration of the 114 houses, reserved out of the 163 now existing, would be managed by Committees, on whom this duty, as well as all matters of finance, would devolve, under the general superintendence, as now, of the Local Government Board.

(b)—*Committees.*

These Committees would have nothing to say to the admission of paupers, or to the giving of out-door relief. These matters of district relief would be under the sole direction of the Board of Guardians (or of Relief).

The Committees of Management would, however, have power to dismiss from the house without previous notice; or, after due notice given to the Boards of relief, to suspend the out-door relief in particular cases to be named.

The Committees would spring from the Boards of Guardians (or of Relief), of which they should be members, and on which they should retain their seats, and which should elect them for a term of two years.

They should be liable to have their management in Committee inquired into, and commented on, by the Boards of Guardians of which they were members, and if to avoid giving explanations, or for other cause, they habitually absented themselves from the meetings of such Boards, or if this explanation were considered unsatisfactory, the Local Government Board should, on the representation of the Board of Guardians, have a

discretionary power of cancelling their election as Committee-men, calling on the Board of Relief to elect another in their place, who should sit subject to the same conditions for the remainder of the unexpired term of two years.

The Committee should make such rules for their own guidance, and for the conduct of the business, as would be approved of by the Local Government Board. They would sit twice a month, when the Relieving Officers should attend with their books.

It should be in the power of the Clerk and Master, acting conjointly, to summon a special meeting of the Committee at twenty-four hours' notice, reporting their having done so, and the cause, to the Local Government Board by the next post.

(c)—*Board of Guardians or of Relief.*

The power of these Boards would be limited to appointing their share of the Committee of Management, not exceeding in number one-fourth of their own body, and to the inquiry into the wants of the poor, making the necessary orders thereon addressed to the Master of the workhouse, to Relieving Officers, or as the case might require.*

Any correspondence between them and the Local Government Board, which from the nature of their duties would be extremely limited, would pass through the hands of the Clerk of the workhouse, and would be conveyed to him, from the Chairman of the Board of Relief, either by post, or through the hands of the Committee-man, or Relieving Officer as the case might require, and the answer through similar channels so returned.

Any complaint made by any Board of Relief, touching the management, etc., of any one or more of its Committee-men, should be laid before the whole Committee for report, and no action of the Local Government Board in the matter should take place till it had received such report.

The number of members remaining as at present, Boards of Guardians should be multiplied, or rather sub-divided, having one for each dispensary district, and sit weekly.

* It may be objected that this limitation of powers might lead to increased out-door relief, the Guardians through jealousy wishing to let as little control as possible pass out of their hands. Such an objection attributes to the Guardians great want of intelligence. Such a change, however, assuming it to be a real one, could be guarded against by rules laid down by the Local Government Board. Thus, the power to grant out-door relief might be limited to a month, a second application to be referred to the Committee for approval, and so on.

If it be objected, that it would lead to the total neglect of their duties by the Guardians, I answer that in the power of appointing paid Guardians, the Local Government Board hold a rod in pickle, which would effectually counteract such a tendency.

(d)—*Constitution of Boards of Relief.*

The Board of Guardians, or of Relief, should be constituted as follows :

One-half of the Board to consist of one member from each electoral division, elected by the same constituency as exists at present, except that no one person should have more than one vote in any electoral division, and that only on condition that he has property in it, and resides within the Union.

The other half of the Board to consist of a number equal to those representing electoral divisions, and to be elected by persons having a certain property qualification within the district, that is to say, £100 a year freehold, or £300 a year leasehold, with plural voting by proxy papers or otherwise, within such limits as shall be deemed fitting.

Members of these Boards to hold their seats for three years ; elections to take place every 18 months, when one-half of the Board should vacate office, being qualified, however, for re-election.*

CHAPTER VII.

ANALYSIS OF THE CONSTITUTION AND PROCEEDINGS OF THE COMMISSION OF INQUIRY.

There has been a Commission to inquire into the Poor Law in Ireland, and it has lately made its Report. As its conclusions differ widely from mine, I hope to strengthen my position by showing that there are *prima facie* grounds for distrusting the Report of that Commission.

To a casual observer nothing could be more satisfactory than the selection of the members who composed it.

The late Chairman, a man in the prime of life, has some knowledge of Parliamentary life, and in the canvass of a hostile electorate left behind him in his native county a reputation for tact and judgment little short of marvellous.

With him were associated two gentlemen somewhat his seniors in point of years, possessing unusual knowledge of Poor Law matters.

Mr. Doyle, valued and tried in long experience of the working of the Poor Law in England. Mr. C. S. Crawford, equally tried and trusted in its administration in Ireland.

If, however, the composition of this Commission be carefully thought over, it will be seen, that to it had been committed almost the only task which it was incompetent to perform.

The Commissioners had to *inquire* into the working of the Poor Law

* On the first establishment of Boards on this principle, half the Boards would of course only sit for eighteen months. After the second election this inequality of tenure would cease.

(Ireland). Now there is a degree of knowledge which is not compatible with inquiry, and such amount of knowledge was possessed by two out of the three gentlemen who formed the Commission. The Chairman had the advantage, I say so deliberately, he had the advantage of being imperfectly acquainted with the system he had to inquire into, and therefore his trained mind was competent to judge, weigh, and compare the several facts as they came before him, untrammelled by preconceived opinions, but without the assistance of members equally fortunately circumstanced, it would be unreasonable to expect, that he could wholly resist the influence of the mature experience of the gentlemen with whom he found himself associated.

Those gentlemen were overweighted with their own knowledge. During the long years of their administration, being, as they are, men of ability and thought, they must have mapped out in their own minds, every weak, every strong point of the system they were administering. To doubt this would be to do them an injustice. In their own minds they must, as a matter of necessity, have come to some pretty clear conclusions as to the advantage or disadvantage, the facility or difficulty of making any change of system. They must have entered upon the labours of this Commission with a pretty clear foresight of its probable outcome, and to foresee the issue of an inquiry is unconsciously to work towards its manifestation. The position of an advocate was one from which they could not escape. It was possible to them on the one hand to advocate reform, on the other they might strenuously uphold the existing state of things; but it was not possible to them to act as jury; it was not possible to them simply to inquire—they knew too much. Questions in their hands necessarily became means of proof where proof seemed desirable, rather than a means of acquiring information.

If this theory be accepted, the *modus operandi* of the Commission becomes susceptible of explanation, and in no other way.

The Commission sent round to every Union the following questions. Questions not put, recollect, to the several Guardians, but to the Boards as such in their collective and corporate capacity—

Queries of Commissioners.

1 Whether having regard to the extent, population, necessities of the sick and destitute poor, and proper administration of the Poor Law in the Union of _____, it should be expedient to dissolve such Union and amalgamate it with any of the adjoining Unions, and if so what portions should be annexed to each of such adjoining Unions?

2. In the event of No. 1 being answered in the negative, would it be desirable to dispense wholly or in part with the use of the existing workhouse of the Union and have the destitute poor accommodated in the workhouse of any adjoining Union; and if so, what Union or Unions?

3. Is any additional workhouse or hospital accommodation required for the Union for the adequate relief of the destitute poor, and especially sick poor, arising from any position of the Union being too remote from the workhouse, thereby entailing undue hardship upon the poor?

Now, with regard to at least two of these questions, I maintain four propositions, the proof of any one of which is utterly fatal to the idea of inquiry, and entirely prevents the Report of the Commission being acceptable as conclusive—

1. The Commissioners did not require the information they avowedly sought for.
2. They put their questions to bodies which were not justified in answering them.
3. The questions were of such a nature as necessarily to lead up to the answers for the most part received.
4. They were of such a nature as to make the expectation of getting an impartial answer unreasonable.

The annual reports of the Local Government Board of themselves show that its archives are replete with every kind of information bearing on the inquiry directed to be made. All its resources were at the service of the Commission of Inquiry.

This being so, and considering the trained minds that were sitting in judgment on the facts so lavishly placed at their disposal; considering that their general and departmental knowledge of the subject would enable them to put their hands on any fact they required to consider, rather I may say, which they desired to exhibit; can anyone suppose that there was any one of these questions which they could not answer infinitely better than the most accomplished, the most experienced Board of Guardians to which they put them?

Even in matters of topography, through the Inspectors of the Local Government Board, better and more reliable information can be got than from the Local Boards. You can examine, cross-examine, and sift the evidence, and weigh the opinions of an individual; you cannot do this with a Board. The opinion of a Board may be the result of knowledge, or of ignorance, you cannot test it, and a Board may be divided in opinion, and then the opinion you get may chance to be the opinion of that section of the Board which is the least valuable. Numbers, influence, and intelligence do not always row in the same boat.

These are undoubted facts, no one could estimate their truth better than the Commissioners; and being facts, it follows that whatever object the Commissioners had in putting these queries to the Local Boards it could not have been with the hope of getting any reliable information they were not already possessed of.

My second point is not one to which for present purposes I attach much importance, but the Commissioners in putting their queries to the Local Boards appear to me to have raised a question of public policy of very high importance—of such importance, indeed, that I am inclined to doubt their having fully weighed its value.

It is simply this—Are the Poor Law Boards to be considered as representing their districts for general purposes?

Prima facie, the duties of a Local Poor Law Board are to govern and manage a certain house, and to apply within a given district certain laws. I do not find that there has been anywhere, anyhow, or by any person or persons, committed to it the power of deciding, or even of giving an opinion, as to whether the existence of that house in the district is or is not a benefit. But if the Board answered the questions of the Commission of Inquiry it would be giving an opinion on that matter; and if it is entitled to give an opinion on such a matter without fresh recourse to the electors, or without direct commission from the Legislature which created it, I do not see why its opinion as to general home or foreign policy should not also be asked, received and respected, or on what principles it can be objected to.

Many persons are of opinion that these Boards ought to exercise such powers; it is, however, something new for a Parliamentary Commission to uphold that view.

In asking each individual member of the Board his opinion on the subject, the Commission would have been acting undoubtedly within its rights, and within the limits of prudence, because an individual is but an individual, and binds no one but himself; but the voice of a corporate body, whether it talks sense or nonsense, is authoritative, and up to a certain point commits those it represents.

The Commissioners, then, appear to me to have assumed a position in which they are compelled to admit, either that the Boards of Guardians are entitled to pronounce a corporate opinion on subjects not distinctly committed to their charge, or that they, the Commissioners, have put their questions to bodies which were not justified in answering them.

I do not myself see a way to escape these alternatives—possibly the Commissioners may; but, however that may be, whether the Commissioners were or were not justified in putting these questions, whether the Boards were or were not justified in answering them, I think any one who will read the next few sentences will be of opinion that in answering them the Boards showed much imprudence.

The third and most important point, however, is, that the questions were so put as necessarily to force the answers.

In putting their questions the Commission of Inquiry did not suggest that any advantage whatever would accrue from the closing of any house. Change creates inconvenience—obvious inconvenience—greater or less, permanent or temporary; no suggestion was made as to how the difficulties which disturbance of the existing state of things would create were to be overcome. In nurseries of children, the presiding authority, sugar-plum in hand, will sometimes exhort a little boy to shut his eyes and open his mouth and see what Heaven will send him; and some such attitude the presiding Commission of Inquiry seems to have adopted towards the different Local Boards. On the general question of amalgamation, or as regards its local application, it requires much study of facts, a careful balancing of difficulties and advantages, to form an opinion as to the propriety of disturbing the existing state of things. How an individual, much less a board, could come to a decision even as regards any particular house without having prepared a very minute after scheme passes my comprehension.

Nevertheless, these questions were put to these Local Boards without any suggestions of advantage or difficulty ; without any alternative scheme being proposed to them—it was not in the nature of things that they could give any answer except that which they did almost universally give—“ *Leave us as we are.*”

The questions of the Commission may be said to be resolvable into this one—a question put without cause assigned—“Do you choose to efface yourselves, to send your poor further distances, and to allow strangers to tax you?”

To put a question, the answer to which can be foreseen, is certainly not to seek information.

The questions, naked of all promise of a better state of things, came then to the Guardians in a kind of abstract form. Thus presented, whatever attraction they might have had for doctrinaires, they could of course have had none for practical men, and so the answers that came were inevitable from the first. Why then were they put?

I approach the consideration of my fourth point with diffidence and anxiety ; lest unthinking minds might be tempted unwisely to suppose that it covers a sneer against the Poor Law Guardians.

The power entrusted to Guardians is very great, and, on the whole, they exercise it fairly well. They give their gratuitous services with a kindly sympathy for the poor, and with general consideration for the ratepayer ; but they are human beings, and are liable to the weaknesses of our common nature.

I have not observed in that nature any tendency to self-effacement. I notice, on the contrary, a very strong desire to fill the unpaid offices of Deputy Lieutenant, Justice of the Peace, Poor Law Guardian, and so on, and I altogether decline to believe that this desire has for its sole motive a wish to benefit our neighbour. On the contrary, it appears to me that every man is eager to get his head and shoulders above the crowd, not so much that he may see, as that he may be seen. Can it be denied for a moment, that Poor Law Guardians value their office for the honour and credit which such a position of trust justly confers upon them? Is the ex-officio Guardian such a paragon of virtue, that he utterly despises the little influence, power, and patronage which is added to those which his general station gives him, by his seat at the Poor Law Board? Does the small shop-keeper or struggling tenant, when he sits at the Poor Law Board transacting the same business as my lord his landlord, giving a vote as good as his, does he see in his office nothing but the power of doing good—nothing that is personally gratifying to himself? I hear people lamenting over the necessity of their having to exercise patronage, and I see Board-rooms crammed when some salary is to be raised by a five pound note. Is this crowding-in of men a proof of virtuous abnegation? If so, it is strange how thinly the same Board-rooms are sometimes attended, when routine duty is to be transacted, when people will not be called on to distress themselves by exercising patronage.

If, however, Guardians value their office (one mind which they are not compelled to exercise) when the Commission of Inquiry asked them to give an opinion, the result of which might be to secure them in the office they hold, or to deprive them of it, they were putting their ques-

tions to interested men, and, with the strongest of us, self-interest will warp judgment.

It is passing strange, too, that these questions were confined to Poor Law Guardians, and so put, too, as to remove all sense of personal responsibility as to the answer. Could none be found throughout the land competent to give an unbiassed opinion?

It has been my privilege to be present when the Commission met a Board which had pronounced for amalgamation.* Evidence was given by the parties for and against it, who divided the Board all but equally. There was much difference in the treatment of the several witnesses. I could not but admire the completeness with which the Commissioners convicted, out of their own mouths, witness after witness who spoke in favour of amalgamation, of ignoring the poor, and of looking at the question solely from a ratepayer's point of view; of misunderstanding the figures they quoted; of having miscalculated this, not allowed for that, and of displaying generally a most superficial knowledge of the whole matter. The smallness of the majority which had declared for amalgamation was brought into at least sufficient light, and good honest gentlemen who thought the Commissioners came round simply for information, looked—well—I had rather not say how they looked, further than that they looked as they evidently felt.

I marvelled much at the simplicity of these gentlemen, rising up one after the other to be bowled over like so many nine pins. There is a good deal in the way in which questions are framed. I desired to put a few. I was not allowed to do so; and from their point of view I think the Commissioners were right.

By contrast, the questions put to the gentlemen who spoke up for leaving things as they are, had for decided result the rounding off of the evidence. These witnesses at least went home with the pleasant conviction on their minds, that they had the good of the poor at heart, and that the Commissioners were, as no doubt they are, very superior men.

If then there is no exaggeration in my analysis, it seems that the Commission of Inquiry put questions, the answers to which could not add to their store of facts;

That they put them to Boards which ought not to have answered them;

That the answers received were a foregone conclusion;

And that they elected to put their questions to persons directly and chiefly interested in the answers.

Here we have a condition of things wholly incompatible with a position of inquiry, and totally inexplicable, if inquiry was the sole object.

If, however, my theory be adopted, namely, that the extensive knowledge enjoyed by the Commissioners, had constrained their minds to adopt at the very outset a certain set of conclusions, if they had formed an opinion, that the cry for amalgamation could not be sustained; that it was uselessly disturbing men's minds; then the attitude of the Com-

* Glennamaddy.

missioners is intelligible, was prudent, and possibly statesmanlike. Questions may be used to demonstrate facts, as well as to elicit information, and used as they were, they go to prove all that the Commissioners seem to have desired should be proved.

But if my contention is grounded on truth, the assumptions and conclusions of the Commissioners are wrong from top to bottom; and to arrive at truth a Commission must be formed, the members of which will be possessed of less knowledge, having minds the elasticity of which has not been impaired by labour in a particular groove.

Better still if it be assumed, that we have, as I believe to be the case, knowledge enough; that what is required is not further inquiry but the drawing up of an improved scheme and system based on the knowledge we already possess.

Let the reforms be outlined and the measure of amalgamation which is feasible decided on, it will neither be difficult nor tedious to fill in the details, and prepare a plan which, if it fall short of perfection, would work more intelligently, usefully, and cheaply, than that now in operation.

The difference of prestige attaching to the names endorsing the Report of the Commission, and to that affixed to this humble attempt at controverting their conclusions, is so great that I thought it necessary to hazard this analysis of their operations.

If I can divert the attention of the reader from the names on the respective title pages, and secure an equal weighing of the matter contained in this pamphlet as in the Report, I do not fear to assert that the door leading to a re-adjustment of the Poor Law system in Ireland on a comprehensive basis, will be found, now that the Commission has reported, wider ajar than it was when the Commission took the matter in hand.

CHAPTER VIII.

CLASSIFICATION.*

IN the course of these pages, it must have made itself clear to the careful reader, that my object has not been to weaken or destroy, but to strengthen and construct.

I venture to say, that however imperfect the reforms which I have suggested, no matter how short they fall of their evident object, yet, if they were each and every one adopted, the Poor Law system would be

* The Commissioners admit the necessity of a certain system of classification of a most inadequate kind, and use it as an argument to show that the housing power of our workhouses is really less than it seems to be. The argument appears to me to work the other way. In these days of quick and easy transit, the different classes of distress should be drafted, not into separate wards, but into separate houses, where a different system, and especially skilled treatment, could be applied. There is no use in applying workhouse tests to the idiot, or the blind; all that can be done is to sue the nearest of kin for the cost of their support. Workhouse tests to such as these cannot be defended, even on the principle on which torture, applied to those suspected of crime, during the middle ages, was held to be defensible.

made more useful to the poor, less onerous to the ratepayer, more easily and more intelligently worked.

But I have not purposed to myself to sketch out a complete and perfect system. I have not ventured to touch on its application to the children of the poor—a delicate ramification of the system which requires a master hand.

The task I set before myself was simpler and more within my reach. I desired to find out and show, how the general system could be administered with greater ease, intelligence, and economy; and to point out the direction in which an immediate saving could be effected.

If I have done this, my self-imposed task is sufficiently complete: the more important, the more interesting, and the more difficult details of its application to the several strata of distress, I purposely leave untouched.

I only seek to clear the rough ground, in the hope that others will make it gladsome with fruit; but I may yet draw attention to some poisonous spots, which require careful and vigorous handling.

Foremost is the training imparted to the children; and by training I do not simply mean mere reading, writing, and numeration—pauper accomplishments—the attainment of which seems to have pleased the late Commission of Inquiry; but that handling of youth which *forms and prepares mind and body to encounter, healthfully and hopefully, the difficulties of life*, which turns out men and women morally robust, and without which training, mere reading and writing are, as I have called them, but accomplishments. Is education so defined—possible in work-houses?

I do not stop to examine how it comes to pass, that on this subject, which lies at the very root of Poor Law success or failure, the Commission of Inquiry does not venture to give a decided opinion,* neither do I examine how it comes to pass, that after some forty years of experience in a civilized country, in an age which passes for being enlightened, it is at best a problem, whether the power of the State is engaged in manufacturing honest citizens, or gaol birds? I do not deal with that vital question, as not being in accord with my present purpose; but I have collected the opinions of others, which will be found in the final, which is possibly the most important chapter of this little work. The witnesses, though few, are select; and it may yet be given me to record, for comparison, a more numerous, though certainly not a more important, set of opinions. If it be desired to substitute for the present system a large measure of boarding out, I have got together a number of names which may serve as rallying points for those who advocate its extension.

* In reference to this subject, the Commissioners of Poor Law Inquiry, lay down a most extraordinary proposition. I read in the Report, page lv., par. 2:—"In order to justify any extensive change in the present system of distributing indoor children, . . . it should be shown—first, that the results of the present system are essentially bad; and next, that the system, if defective, cannot be satisfactorily improved." This is shifting the onus of proof with a vengeance. Fancy a father being urged to send his boy to Eton, *unless* he could prove that the system was essentially bad. If, being bad, it can be satisfactorily improved, why does not the Local Government Board show the way? I assume, that the Local Government Board does not know how to improve it, or contrary to almost universal belief, thinks the system good.

If it be desired to make use of industrial schools separated from the blighting atmosphere of the workhouse, I have shown that buildings are at hand ready to be so used, and that money, sufficient for the purpose, is now being squandered, which could be turned to the better account.*

But there is one other taint which I desire to hold up to reprobation, so that a remedy may be devised by those who are wise as well as humane.

We brand poverty as a crime, punishable by imprisonment for a term, or for life. The technical sentence is "Giving them the House." With our limited knowledge of the human heart, it is, perhaps, impossible for us to entirely avoid this, but we might do much to alleviate the sentence. It is not only imprisonment for safe custody, for convenience of treatment, and to avoid fraud, but we make it terribly penal by disregard of classification.

It has always appeared to me that the chief horror of penal servitude was not so much the enforced labour, the rigidity of the discipline, nor yet even the shame of the livery, but the abomination of the society.

Except for the good conduct rewards which the convicted thief may enjoy, there would be much analogy between the treatment extended to him, and that extended to the convicted pauper. The prison is there, the livery is there, and the foul society.

We find men and women, or they present themselves to us, innocent of all but misfortune, and therefore, entitled to our respect; and we compel them to associate, by day and by night, with those who, to our own knowledge, have been dissolute, depraved, and abandoned, and are only not so now, because they lack the power.

Not only is this so, but we have fellow-creatures to deal with, stunted in mind, if not in body, often in both. Unhappy brothers and sisters, who, with little of our capacity for enjoyment, have much of our capacity for suffering. These we mix up with the motley crew of paupers, to vex them, and in return, to be their butt and their jest.

Am I exaggerating? We have grown up in a state of society where such things are not only possible, but are of daily occurrence. When human beings are unable to help themselves, we gather them together to be fed and sheltered with little more discrimination of individual requirement than we give to our cattle, certainly, on the whole, with less interest in the result.

But were we not familiarized with such a state of things. If, ignorant of such customs, we knew of a wealthy landowner who, finding people starving on his estate, solicitous only to avoid the shame of their deaths, were for convenience sake and small economies, to gather into one building, the man broken with toil, the man broken with drink, the helpless child, the confirmed idler, the widow whose bread-winner had been taken from her, the reckless prostitute, and the idiot, and should leave all these various classes to shake together, harass one another, and

* Such an application was proposed by Mr. H. J. Gill, M.A., T.C.D., in a useful little pamphlet, which was privately circulated, in 1873.

The existence of these now misapplied buildings, points to the facilities which exist for the establishment of asylums, in which those mentally and bodily affected may separately receive the enlightened treatment suited to their especial wants, as well as to the establishment of industrial schools.

find their own level, I do think that we should come to execrate his very name ; and it is we who do these things, or allow of their being done, by holding our peace, and not crying out. We dwell where such things are not only possible, but parts of our social system. Not only are we silent, but we close our minds against the very thought of them. The remedy is, no doubt, difficult to find, but to say that none can be found is almost to blaspheme.*

I take from a Report of Mr. Henley's, presented to Parliament, August 1877, the following extract :—

[Extract from report made by F. B. Lanborn, Chairman of the Board of State Charities, to the Massachusetts Centennial Commission, 1st February, 1876.]

“ If, then, public charity has done something in Massachusetts to control the evils which in European countries seem capable only of slight alleviations, and to reduce the number of the dependent classes to a minimum, let us see more precisely how it has been done.

“ Our philanthropists have first classified, then educated, and finally protected these dependants, and at each step in the process the number of the self-supporting has been increased. *To separate the young from the old, the vicious from the honest poor, the invalid and insane from the able-bodied and the sane, was the first step ; and this classification once made released many from a condition of absolute dependence, and put them in the way of self-support. The children thus cease to be paupers, and become pupils in some school, or find places in families where they gradually rise to a condition of independence ; the sick and the insane are more rapidly restored to health, and the vicious, placed under wholesome restraint, are compelled to earn part of their own subsistence.* Next to classification comes instruction, and here it is that the Massachusetts system has been particularly efficacious. In schools for the blind, for the deaf mute, for the idiot, we have trained those classes elsewhere so dependent to a very satisfactory degree of independence ; *in orphan asylums, and reformatories, and industrial schools we have educated the neglected and the vicious among the young, so that thousands of that class have become respectable members of society, and this work has been undertaken by the public and paid for by the public treasury in this commonwealth to an extent elsewhere unknown.*”

N.B.—The Commissioners of State Charities in Massachusetts are empowered by law to transfer pauper inmates from one so-called charitable institution, or lunatic asylum, to another.

* It appears that classification of a very complete kind has been instituted in Massachusetts.

THE WORKHOUSE SYSTEM AS APPLIED TO THE TRAINING OF YOUTH.

INTRODUCTION.

That it is the duty of parents to prepare their child for the struggle of life is a proposition which no one will dispute.

The State stands to the Pauper child in "*Loco Parentis*."

How has it discharged the trust ?

Is the Workhouse treatment of children beneficent ?

Does it turn them out useful members of society ? or does it, at a cost ruinous because of its results, turn them out, helpless and useless for the most part, to subsist in misery on the earnings of others ?

These are the questions which the following digest pretends to deal with.

It is indisputable that even the humblest employers of labour recoil from employing youths reared in a Workhouse ; and such repugnance, when we bear in mind the growing pressure on the labour market, seems to accuse the State of failure ; and if, as is the opinion of more than one of the witnesses (for whose names see the last page) "*the Workhouse is the cesspool of the district to which all immorality gathers*" (A. 2., C. 9., pages iv., xv.), the cause of failure is not far to seek. Nothing healthy grows in a cesspool.

That in times of unexampled distress, when the sole problem was to keep body and soul together, a faulty system was snatched at, as drowning men snatch at straws, was excusable enough ; but that a system should be longer tolerated of which such testimony can be given, as will be found in the words of thirty-eight witnesses, scattered through the following pages, would be a hideous scandal.

Neither, again, is it of avail to say that the Workhouse system MIGHT work well. It suffices that it has not worked well. Machinery that MAY work well is worse than useless. What we want of systems, as of machinery, is, that, given ordinary care and attention, they MUST work well.

The failure of the Workhouse system as an educational agent is almost universally felt and admitted. Nevertheless, I have heard the failure challenged by a gentleman whose word just now is all-important in regard to the Irish Poor Law. "*Can you prove it to be a failure ?*" were his words.

To prove true what all know to be true, is not always an easy matter. Of the results of Workhouse education there are no statistics. The Local Government Board does not admit failure, nor will it assist inquiry further than it is compelled, as I have reason to know. There is thus no direct evidence attainable.

If, however, the opinions, say of the Chaplains of Workhouses, could be got at;—if those opinions all, or nearly all of them, pointed in the one direction, and declared the system to have failed in its educational part, it is difficult to imagine, how opinions of such gravity, freely tendered by men so competent to judge, of men having such opportunities for arriving at a correct judgment, could be set aside.

Certain it is, that no serious inquiry into the educational system, as applied to pauper children can be instituted, without applying to those gentlemen.

I applied to them,—but without authority to compel an answer, and, under such circumstances, the success which enables me to compare and publish the opinions of thirty-five of them is more remarkable than my failing to obtain the confidence of the remainder.

That an unofficial person, seeking to probe a system, should try and persuade its salaried officers, to divulge matter possibly derogatory to the character of that system, runs on the very verge of justice, though leaving the verge unpassed.

It must be admitted, that those who have surmounted the delicacy of the position, have displayed a courage, and a zeal for the public good, and an ardour of charity towards the defenceless Workhouse child, which none are obliged to follow, but all must admire.

This, however, is a case, where the withholding of evidence, tells only something less, than the free giving of it.

I approached the Chaplains armed with the countenance, and in nearly every case the sympathy, of five Protestant and seven Catholic Bishops; besides that of the late lamented Cardinal Cullen.

Is it to be supposed, that, approaching the clergy under such patronage, they would have withheld their opinions, if they could conscientiously say anything good of the system they assist in administering?

Not only did these members of the two hierarchies, give me letters of encouragement, and authorise me to apply to the Chaplains of their dioceses, but I was permitted to inaugurate the circulation of my *Queries* by publishing the letters of approval of the Protestant Bishop of Kilmore, and the Catholic Bishop of Elphin—(*Express*, August 13, Appendix C.)

This sympathy, is of itself a proof, so far as it goes, and it goes far, of the necessity of the work—so necessary indeed, that though undertaken by a person entirely unknown to nearly all their lordships, its innate fitness made it worthy of their support. Furthermore, the toleration extended to me in newspapers and in the letters of the fifty-seven gentlemen who had the courtesy to acknowledge my letters of inquiry, proves, that men are aware of the urgent necessity there is for such an inquiry;—and the remarkable consensus of opinion as to the unfortunate result of Workhouse training which this inquiry has brought out, plainly shows, how full and convincing the evidence would be, if properly sought for, by those armed with official power.

These facts alone, the sympathy of many prelates in several cases warmly expressed, the answers of many of the Chaplains, the reticence of others, (unmeaning, if they could say anything good of the system), are enough to show, that a long step in advance has been taken;—and the reproach of barrenness does not attach to my labour.

In the following Report, or Digest of Evidence, I endeavour to avoid any personal expression of opinion. I have not hesitated to omit unimportant words, and to fit together phrases which lie apart in the same letter, but the quotations are as nearly as possible in the exact words of the writer, and each one's view is given it is hoped, as he intended it.

To guard, however, against any chance misuse, the general publication has been anticipated, and copies of this digest sent to each gentleman who favoured me with his views, for correction.

Of the fifty-seven gentlemen who answered my letters, thirteen excused themselves from answering the queries on the ground of insufficient knowledge; the letter of another did not apply to the matter in hand, and one covered the opinion of another person.

I have dealt with Presbyterian, Protestant and Catholic opinion separately, because, with regard to at any rate the first group of queries, it might be expected that divergence of schools of religious belief would create divergence in the mode of viewing the question, and such separation seemed to me to suit the convenience of the general reader.

The letter of inquiry, with the queries in the order in which they were issued, appears in Appendix D., accompanied with a list of the names of those who have been good enough to contribute to this inquiry, and the numbers by which their evidence is referred to.

In Appendix B. will be found the preliminary circular to the Bishops.

In framing the queries, it was endeavoured to make them suggestive, yet leaving full liberty for variety of reply.

The variety, as well as fulness of detail met with in the answers, gives reason for thinking, that the object desired in framing those queries has been attained, and the general agreement which exists, as to the failure of the Workhouse system in its application to children, is placed in strong relief by this very variety.

After mature consideration, I have preferred referring to my authorities by numbers rather than by their names.* Being men of retirement, who give their names for the sake of the matter, not for the pleasure of seeing them in print, I believe I shall consult their feelings by lessening, as far as possible, the prominence which, for the sake of the work, I must give them. By doing so, I no doubt lessen to general readers, such interest as this digest may have for them; but those who read it, will be for the most part thoughtful men, who will read for instruction, and will value the brevity and concentration of reference thus obtained.

* The names will be found in one list on the last page.

DIGEST OF EVIDENCE.

My correspondents, in many cases, preferred grouping the questions, and their lead has been followed in the arrangement of this digest.

I take, then, together, in the first place, the 1st, 2nd, and 11th queries—

1. What, in a general way, is your opinion as to the results of Workhouse training in the formation of the disposition of youth; having regard, not only to the actual school teaching, but to the effect of the general atmosphere, and surroundings of the place?
2. Can you trace anything which may be to be regretted, to anything incidental to the Workhouse system?
11. In case, in your opinion, Workhouse training has proved a failure, can you suggest a mode by which, without stepping outside the Poor Law system, it can be made effective for good?

Out of the forty-one witnesses whose names I have given, there are two, who express unqualified approval of the system. It must not be, however, inferred that all the rest express unqualified disapproval. All gradations of opinion will be found, from mistrust, saved from disapprobation by special local features, down to utter abhorrence.

Dealing first with the six opinions from Presbyterian Clergy:—

One (A. 7.) expresses himself decidedly favourable to the system. Another (A. 5.) gives a favourable opinion, but limits its expression to the cases of Presbyterian children, who were few in number, and apparently well looked after. Four out of the six speak unfavourably of the system. Thus, (A. 2.) says: "*Workhouses are the worst places in which to train up youth; ninety per cent. of the inmates are the off-scourings of society; the National Workhouses are cesspools.*" (see also C. 9., Appendix A.) Again, (A. 3.): "*The effect of the general atmosphere and surroundings is fatal to the proper training of children.*" (A. 8.) Considers that, "*for the moral training of children, the Poor Law system has proved a failure.*" The same four recommend the BOARDING-OUT SYSTEM, as being the most in accordance with the plans of the Almighty. The "*Workhouse system striking at the root of two of the tenderest feelings of the human heart—sympathy on the one side, gratitude on the other,*" (A. 2.) In recommending this system (A. 1.) is expressive: according to him "*It is a mistake to herd children in Workhouses, or even in Industrial Schools.*"

I have from Protestant Chaplains twenty expressions of opinion; and I couple with them one layman unknown to me, whose testimony was substituted for his own by (B. 27.), as coming from a person of more experience. These gentlemen agree with the Presbyterian witnesses in this, that Boarding out is recommended by thirteen of them.

But, while only one Presbyterian Chaplain notices Industrial Schools (and he does so unfavourably), six of the Protestant Chaplains speak of them as useful, either as adjuncts to the Boarding out system, or independent of it. The system, as at present worked, is blamed by all but one, (B. 29.) who says, "*Workhouse training is as good as we can find elsewhere; I cannot think it has proved a failure on the whole.*" He adds, "*Protestant Reformatory Schools are doing a good work;*" but the remark does not seem to be intended to have any application to his views on the Workhouse system.*

Quoting the remainder in detail: In the opinion of (B. 4.), "*the Workhouse is the worst possible training place for children.*" (B. 7.) Considers them "*peculiarly injurious, there being no home influences; the training fails to influence children in a manner favourable to their usefulness in life; there are no rewards for industry.*" (Compare C. 10. and 11., page viii.) (B. 10.) also recommends Boarding out, and considers the "*effect of the Workhouse very bad.*" (B. 11.), as an abstract question, prefers the Boarding-out system, but adds the following valuable remark: "*To a considerable extent the home influences of those who become inmates of the Workhouse would not be beneficial.*" (Compare with C. 6., page viii.) (B. 12.) considers "*Workhouse training, even under favourable circumstances, disadvantageous to the young; Boarding out for younger children would be a vast improvement; and if boys could be advanced to training ships, &c., it would benefit both them and the country.*"

According to (B. 14.), Workhouse training, begets a "*lack of self-reliance and self-respect, with poor moral perception; it would be difficult to make it effective for good, so long as the Workhouse (so called) remains as at present, a school of idleness; managed more in the way of Industrial Schools, they probably could be made useful.*"

(B. 15.) says, "*If the object of the Workhouse system was, in any respect, to fit the young for afterlife, I should say it has proved a very decided failure. It would prove a very material benefit to a Workhouse boy to be drafted into a Reformatory or Industrial School, and we should be relieved of the moral difficulty which seems attached to the use of Reformatories and Industrial Schools, without a like provision for the children of honest poor.*"

The letter of (B. 16.) has constructive suggestions of much value. He points not only to failure, but to at least one cause of it. "*Workhouse training has not been attended with that success which we might desire. The generality of Boards of Guardians are, from their position and want of education, totally incapable of directing the machinery requisite.*" (Compare C. 2., page vii.) "*Formation of character would be impossible, no matter how careful the scholastic teaching, the entire surroundings being deeply impregnated with examples of idleness, ignorance and vice. I would suggest the amalgamation of Unions as regards adults, and the formation of the other houses into Industrial Schools. Children nursed out should remain with the families till they attained the age of—boys, ten, girls, twelve years,—when they should be taken into the district Industrial School.*" (Compare C. 8., page viii., C. 12., page ix.) "*The Union*

* My correspondent does not however wish it to be understood that he does not consider the system capable of improvement.

would soon feel the relief it would experience by being at once and for ever relieved of supporting idleness and vice." (Compare B. 17. and B. 18., page vi.)

A gentleman who, in the exercise of his sacred ministry, has twenty-five years' experience of English as well as Irish Workhouses (B. 17.), considers the "*Workhouse system to be a gigantic blunder.*" He shadows out a similar plan to the last witness. He says, "*Boarding out the children would be an actual saving of funds, and the salvation of the children. Workhouses should be industrial abodes, and of moderate capacity. I would have a separate institution for children where industries could be taught.*"

(B. 18.) agrees with the last witness in thinking that "*Boarding out, though more expensive in the outset, would pay in the end, as it would diminish the numbers of the hereditary pauper class.*" He considers "*Workhouse education a bad preparation for a useful career.*" (Compare B. 16. and 17., pages vi. and x.)

Workhouse training is, according to (B. 19.) "*bad for children; the general atmosphere does not tend to the formation of a high tone of character.*"

(B. 20.) considers it his duty to dissuade poor Protestants from entering the Workhouse. He has "*rarely known an instance where young people trained in the Workhouse ever got on well in afterlife.*"

(B. 23.) desires "*boarding out in houses near to where good schools and training places in agreeable and practical household duties, may be at work. In this way the double benefit would accrue, of the family influence and the general combined public tuition.*" The tone of his valued communication is adverse to the Workhouse system.

(B. 24.) bears testimony to the good management of the Workhouse where he does duty, but, nevertheless, considers that "*Workhouse training has a bad effect on the disposition and character of those brought up under it, which must appear in a more aggravated form in larger establishments, and considers the evils as incidental to the system. They would be removed or mitigated were the Boarding-out system adopted.*"

(B. 26.) complains of "*want of stated and regular occupations; anything like an example of industrious habits on the part of their elders is not afforded them.*"

The lay gentleman whose remarks were kindly forwarded to me by (B. 27.) considers that "*nothing can be worse than the atmosphere of a Workhouse for the training of youth. In nine cases out of ten, the old and middle-aged inmates have been reduced through habitual drunkenness or other vice.*" (An estimate corresponding precisely with that of A 2.) He recommends the "*Boarding-out system, under proper supervision, and attendance at the National Schools.*"

In the opinion of (B. 28. and B. 30.) "*the whole system is wrong,*" and "*as bad as it can be.*"

(B. 31.) expects the system to "*increase largely our habitual paupers. Children brought up in the blighting atmosphere of a Workhouse get to regard it as their home, and return to it again and again when they have grown up.*" (Compare A. 8., page xii., B. 17., B. 18., page xii., C. 7., page xiii.) "*I would board out—I would establish receiving houses in the Colonies, where they would be taught practical work. At home a*

Workhouse child is more or less branded, and feels himself degraded." (Compare C. 6., page viii., and C. 7., page viii., and C. 11., page viii.)

(B. 32.) disapproves of sending children to the Workhouse, and recommends boarding out.

In the course of this collation of evidence, it does not enter into my plan to use any part of it for the purpose of supporting any view of my own, nor, except in the most general way, to point to the conclusions to be drawn from it; but as I find that Presbyterians, Protestants and Catholics, not all of them, but in considerable numbers, recommend boarding out, either by itself, or in conjunction with other arrangements, it is well to bear in mind that, in carrying out such a plan, the numbers and the lesser average wealth of the Catholic population creates a difficulty which, in the case of Protestant and Presbyterian children, does not exist. In the case of these two smaller sections of the population, an effort to treat with the Local Government Board, on a principle of mutual assistance, ought not to present insuperable difficulties. Into the merits of the question it is not my intention to enter here, or now.

To continue with a comparison of the Roman Catholic opinions placed at my disposal. (C. 1.) attributes to the general atmosphere and surroundings of the place that "*the result of Workhouse education is not good.*" My correspondent from Celbridge (C. 2.) seems to be, and is indeed from his own shewing, peculiarly favorably situated. He "*does not consider the system to have proved a failure,*" but he notices the "*want of industrial occupation.*" In his district there is a large demand for youthful labour: the officers of the house are not only exemplary (as I am happy to believe they are in most Workhouses), but seem to have a SPECIAL FITNESS for their work. He praises the conduct of the children, but finds them "*diffident and nervous.*" He considers "*Guardians can effect much good or evil.*" (Compare B. 16., page v., C. 10., page viii.) "*The Guardians of this Union are mostly gentlemen of high rank, unimpeachable morals, kindly and gentle dispositions, and devoted to their duties.*" This witness, on whose testimony I have dwelt as one dwells on a pleasing picture, "*confines his remarks to his own Union, and considers that results depend on accidental circumstances, as much as in the system of Workhouse training itself.*" May I be permitted here to remind the reader that, in my opening remarks I said, that we wanted a system which must work—MIGHT won't suffice.

I have no more of such evidence to give. Turning, then, with pain to very different experiences, (C. 3.) denounces the system as being "*simply depraving. A case cannot be made out for continuing the present unsuccessful and pernicious system of training young paupers,*" and declares that "*throwing the young and the old together is tantamount to training the young pauper on the model of the old one.*" He recommends the using wings of our half-occupied houses as Industrial Schools, separating the children absolutely from all communications or contact with the adults.

(C. 4.) sends a remarkably valuable communication, as containing the views of the Chaplain of the Workhouse and his three curates, who work in it, under and with him. He considers the "*system to*

have failed as a training institution," and recommends "boarding out, with special precautions." Each of these four gentlemen puts in some few words of his own; all pointing to similar conclusions.

(C. 6.) attributes to "intercourse with the adults, and specially with respect to the very parents of the pauper children (here compare C. 9. in Appendix and B. 31., page vii.) that the system tends to degrade and demoralize youth." He recommends, "in the case of children of poor but moral parents, out-door relief. Nothing has been able to supply the place of home influence." (Compare here A. 2., and remarks as to the feeling generally of section A.) "Those of vicious and lawless parents could be trained only in Reformatory or Industrial Schools." He complains that "the resources of the children are not developed, and the stigma of the Workhouse mars their future prospects." (Compare B. 31., page vi., C. 12., page xi.)

(C. 7.) Re-echoes this last sentiment, and says that "children who have worn the Workhouse brand consider themselves as a degraded race, and are wanting in self-respect." He regrets that "children should be so soon separated from their parents," and considers that "the results of the system are socially bad."

(C. 8.), a lay gentleman of long experience as a guardian, considers the "results not satisfactory. Orphan boys of eight and girls of ten should be sent to Industrial Schools." (Compare B. 16., page v.)

The letter of (C. 9.) goes into the condition and causes, of that condition of Workhouse system, with such detail, and the observations so fit the one into the other, that I found myself unable to make extracts, and accordingly have printed the whole in the Appendix, where it will well repay perusal. Suffice it here to say, that the writer condemns the Workhouse system with energy and ability.

The opinions of (C. 10.) should be compared with those of (B. 16., page v., and C. 2., page vii.) "Poor Law Guardians have a powerful influence when intelligent and sympathetic." He by no means condemns the system, in fact he compares his Workhouse children with those outside favorably; but he considers, that the "Boarding-out system might be extended and rendered more beneficial; that it is a loss to the country that we have not a wise system of industrial training; that a central industrial school for pauper children could be easily established in each county;" and he puts these pregnant questions: "Are not our paupers as intelligent as our convicts? Why is poverty more punished than robbery?" (Compare B. 7., page v.)

A gentleman well known in his locality, and outside, and of remarkable experience in this and kindred matters (C. 11.), declares, that, "Educationally and morally the result is bad." He complains with the last witness (and with B. 7., see page v.) that "there are no rewards, such as even convicts can obtain, for good conduct, and the Workhouse child is equally worthy of consideration." He points out, as does another witness (C. 3.), that "the attendance of the children being certain, they should be better scholars than those reared outside, whereas they are not." He agrees with preceding witness in thinking, that "children should not be separated from their mothers till the fifth year." (Compare C. 7. and C. 12., pages viii., ix.) He considers that "one of the greatest blessings to the youth in Workhouses would be, to have them transferred to Industrial Schools."

(C. 12.), after pointing out certain evils, which will be reverted to when we come to consider the fourth group of questions, says, that "*Under the present system, solely and entirely, there is no efficacious remedy for these evils. All children between five and ten should be boarded out, and obliged during the last three years to attend the National School, and after this they should be sent to an Industrial one for five years. Thus, their early evil impressions might be eradicated, and they would become useful members of society, and cease for ever to be a burden to themselves and a tax on the ratepayer.*" (Compare B. 16, 17., and 18., page vi.) This witness's reasons for his several opinions are of much interest, and I hope I shall be called on to publish his and others of these letters in full.

The object of the second group of questions was to institute a comparison between the youthful pauper, inside and outside the house, at a very early part of his career, as the fourth group was intended to institute a similar comparison when become by age capable of self support.

It consists of :—

3rd.—Are children coming into the house at say the age of eight and over likely to affect injuriously the tone of those who have been reared from infancy in it?

4th.—On the other hand, are they likely to suffer from contact with those who have been so reared?

Many witnesses, in answering the first group of queries, exhausted all they wished to say, on the general question, and a great many have passed these 3rd and 4th queries by, unnoticed.

The divergence of opinions amongst the rest is so great, that practically they leave the question where it was, and the attempt at comparison at this early stage of their career appears to have failed. Neither indeed, compared with other branches of the inquiry, has it much importance.

Thus, the opinions of (A. 1.) and (A. 3.) neutralize each other.

(B. 12.) thinks that those coming in are of a class likely to injure those already in; whilst (B. 10., 14., and 30.) take an opposite view.

(B. 24.) leans to the view of those last quoted.

Some think they injure each other, whilst others again are of opinion that neither hurts the other.

A large majority of the Roman Catholic witnesses are of opinion that those entering the house would suffer from the companionship of those reared in the house.

I pass on to the 5th query which will stand by itself.

5th.—To what extent are the children in contact with adult paupers? Is such intercourse useful or otherwise? If otherwise, within what limits can it be restrained?

This query, again, did not command many replies. To answer it would require a minute and close attention to the practice of the house, which will vary, according to the wishes of Boards of Guardians and of their officers.

Those replies which were received, are however, of importance, and will be found to bear upon several of the answers to other queries.

(A. 1.) admits "*injury to a limited extent caused by the vice and ignorance of the mothers.*"

(A. 3.) speaks of there being a "*good deal of intercourse, owing to the paucity of officers,*" and considers it "*very harmful.*"

(A. 8.) does not see his way to "*separation in small Unions.*" Considers that the intercourse which takes place is not profitable—"*language being simply abominable.*" (Compare C. 12., page xi.)*

(B. 7.) says "*that the children are usually in contact with adult female paupers,—the results are, of course, bad, the women being mostly depraved.*"

(B. 12.) does "*not consider they come much in contact in well managed houses until they attain the age of sixteen or seventeen, when the intercourse is generally limited and guarded.*"

(B. 16.) remarks that "*mothers of illegitimate children are allowed too much liberty in having their children with them after the age of infancy.*"

(B. 17.) finds that "*the morals of the young are corrupted by the adult inmates.*"

(B. 18.) says, "*The children must be more or less in contact with adult paupers, especially with the victims of seduction, by whom, as the most able-bodied, the work of the house is generally carried on.*" (Compare B. 12.)

Compare also with (B. 12.) the opinion of (B. 24.), to the effect that much injury is done to girls by allowing them, when in the infirmary or elsewhere, to associate with women of bad character.

The gentleman whose letter was forwarded by (B. 27.) says, "*It is quite impossible to isolate children in Workhouses; all intercourse with adults is injurious.*"

(B. 29.), who was one of those who finds no fault with the system, says that "*there is no intercourse with adults until sixteen or seventeen, when endeavour is made to get them employment.*" I think it right here to call attention to the size and importance of the Workhouse in which this gentleman is employed.

(B. 30.) also finds "*the intercourse very limited.*" This also is the opinion of (C. 2., C. 11.); whilst (C. 1., C. 8., C. 12.) appear to consider that there is intercourse which might be lessened, and that its existence is injurious.

(C. 9.) deals with this question (see Appendix A.) in a striking way.

I extract from the letter of (C. 12.) a graphic description of some scenes of Workhouse life which bear indirectly on the 5th question, and show the imperfect nature of the limitation of intercourse, and some of the results of such imperfection. "*The children born in the house are for the most part illegitimate, and from the earliest dawn of*

* He writes also to say that where possible it would be very desirable to effect complete separation, but the officials are not to blame for any want of it in small Unions.

reason they hear the most pernicious expressions and witness the most disastrous examples. When young and innocent children, born of honest but destitute parents, enter the house, both classes meet in the schools, where it is no unusual thing to witness early and sad examples of perverse insubordination. When corrected by the teacher, I have known the mothers of such children to have forced in the door of the school-room, and, amidst a shower of execrations and threats against the teacher, to have carried off their offspring. When the children arrive at a certain age they are separated from their parents (in many cases somewhat of a blessing), and are relegated each evening at seven, p.m., to their respective dormitories, male and female; then they are, with callous indifference, locked up for the night. They turn their dormitory into a regular pandemonium, beating and abusing, tearing and tossing about their bedding, and perpetrating all manner of wickedness and rascality, without check. The girls at intervals are favored with the rehearsal of the foulest epithets and coarsest badinage from their neighbours, the more mature medley of able-bodied women."

A comparison between children who have passed some years in the Workhouse, and have caught its tone, and those in needy circumstances, who have been reared outside of it, is attempted by Queries 6 and 7. Any advantages which State aid may be expected to have given to pauper youth is sought to be measured by Queries 8 and 9. These four questions form one group, tending to a similar end, and they are here set forth:—

- 6th.—Is it the result of your observation that Workhouse children have less, or as much, or more, of the life and energy natural to children, than those who have had to struggle with poverty outside? Are they, by comparison with children outside, more or less healthy?
- 7th.—Do they acquire habits of industry and self-reliance equal to, greater than, or less than, those acquired by children who live in poverty outside?
- 8th.—Do they appear to have acquired habits of subordination, honesty, and thrift?
- 9th.—Do they leave the Workhouse with any special fitness for employment as labourers, servants, or mechanics?

The answering to these queries gives a more unfavourable view of the results of the system, than that presented by the answers to the first query. In but one case is the comparison in favour of the Workhouse system. Poverty, all but defenceless and naked, outside, seems to have happier results, immediate or prospective, than those resulting from the great State machinery presided over by the Local Government Board. I proceed to record the evidence:

(A. 1.) considers "*it impossible the children could acquire good habits.*"

(A. 2.) says, "*those brought up in these houses are physically, morally, and intellectually inferior to those trained elsewhere.*"

They have, according to (A. 3.), "*far less energy or life than those of a similar class outside; they are not as healthy, as industrious and self-reliant, and, when sent out, are absolutely worthless.*"

(A. 8.) finds that *"they have less energy and are less healthy than those living outside in poverty. Most of those coming under my notice prefer getting back to the house, to fair places and good wages outside."* (Compare B. 17, 18, 31., C. 7., pages xii., vi., xiii.)

In the opinion of (B. 7.) *"the children lack energy and spirit; they are not healthy; they rarely display subordination, honesty or thrift: on leaving they are unfitted for employment. I do not see how habits of industry and reliance could be formed in the Workhouse."*

(B. 10.) says, *"they do not seem as happy, lively, or healthy as other children."*

(B. 11.) speaks of the care they receive in the Union he is concerned with, and considers they contrast favourably with the children outside; but says, you *"cannot expect much self-reliance, honesty or thrift in those who have had no other training than that which can be had in Workhouses."*

(B. 12.) sees no difference in the health of children of eight or nine compared with those outside; but *"younger children, especially those born in the house or brought in as infants, lack health and energy."* He finds *"Workhouse children inferior in self-reliance, tact and quickness; but, where a farm is cultivated or trades taught in connection with the Workhouse, there is an average fitness for such occupations."*

(B. 14.) says, *"they have less energy, less health, certainly less industry and self-reliance, than those acquired by poor children outside, and are less fitted for employment."*

(B. 15.) corroborates an observation made in the introduction, and points out that *"farmers do not often hire boys and girls from the Workhouses. The children have less energy; they do not leave the Workhouse with any special fitness as mechanics, nor even as labourers and servants."*

(B. 16.) compares them to *"exotics, as regards life and energy, such as have those who have had to struggle with poverty outside. They do not leave the Workhouse with any special fitness for employment."* He has known them in some instances become what may be termed *"wicked, ill-tempered and impertinent to a degree."*

(B. 17.) considers the Workhouse *"bad for the health of the children; the boys turn out idle, and come back to the house."* (Compare B. 31., page vi., and B. 18., page xii.) *"The girls, as a rule, make shipwreck early."*

(B. 18.) sees *"no want of health in the children, though they bear traces of epidemics, such as ophthalmia. They are not, as a rule, equal in energy and self-help to children reared outside. They do not leave with any special fitness for any employment, but quite the contrary, and are very likely to come back to the Workhouse; which they look on as their natural home."*

(B. 19.) notices the *"want of life and energy"* compared with those outside. *"They do not, as a rule, leave the house with any special fitness for employment. There is nothing in the system to teach them habits of honesty or thrift; rather, I think, the contrary."*

(B. 24.) agrees with (B. 18.) as to the healthiness of the children generally, but finds them wanting in energy and thrift; and, when they leave, *"they are fitted only for the lowest class of farm or domestic service."*

(B. 26.) finds them even "*more healthy than the pauper class of children outside; but those outside acquire more industry and self-reliance.*" He agrees with (B. 15.), that people are reluctant to take servants out of Workhouses.

(B. 27.) testifies to their good health, as also to their laziness, and says, "*if allowed to grow up in the Workhouse, they do not acquire habits of subordination—quite the contrary.*"

(B. 28.) Considers them "*equal in energy to, but subdued as compared with, other children, living, as they do, under unloving discipline.*" (Compare C. 10., page xiii.)

(B. 29.) finds them "*as lively as those outside, but less healthy,*" which he attributes to the parents and not to the Workhouse system. His opinion throughout is decidedly favourable to the system. He says, "*Boys are taught to be labourers, shoemakers, &c.; girls to be servants.*"

(B. 30.) takes a widely different view. He finds the children "*lifeless, devoid of the natural energy of youth, and without desire of improvement. They do not acquire habits of industry or self-reliance, but habits the reverse of subordination, honesty and thrift. They have no special fitness for any employment.*"

(C. 1.) gives identically the same evidence as the last witness, as does also (C. 2.) It is well to remind the reader that this gentleman answered the first group of questions in a sense favourable to Workhouses under, at least, the specially favourable circumstances he speaks of (page vii.); but he compares the children to "*exotics*" (Compare B. 16., page xii.), and finds the children less self-reliant than children outside, and with less life and energy; but he attributes this to the monotony of their lives, to their being too much confined, and the want of sufficiently nutritious food.

(C. 3.) says that, "*servants taken from the Workhouse are lazy, stubborn and insolent, and, on very slight provocation, threaten to go back to the house.*" (Compare A. 8., B. 17., page xii., C. 6., page xiii.)

(C. 4.) gives the Workhouse children character for "*subordination and honesty, as compared with those outside,*" but considers them to have "*less of life and energy;*" and says that, "*Workhouse training disqualifies them from earning a livelihood afterwards.*"

(C. 6.) is of opinion that the children, "*as they grow up, have no fitness or self-reliance for the battle of life. Girls, when the time comes, have no wish to leave, but seek admission to the body of the house. The youths who leave the Workhouses become useless, and often dangerous members of society.*"

(C. 10.) in his remarks on the first group of queries, took a favourable view of the training; nevertheless, he notices, with "*pity, the subdued, hang-dog features and apprehensive eyes of the little ones; the physique of all Poorhouse children is half-malformed.*"

(C. 11.) urges a change in the dietary (Compare C. 2.) He finds rickety and strumous cases, owing to the confinement and nature of the food, and says that, "*in a Workhouse, the majority of the most refractory and hopeless cases are the inmates who have been reared in one.*"

(C. 7.) agrees with (A. 8., B. 17., C. 3., and C. 6.), that "*those leaving the Workhouse are inclined to return to the life of idleness they had*

quitted." (See also B. 31., page vi.) He describes the children as, "physically and, generally speaking, morally inferior to children of same class reared outside, and leave the Workhouse with a special unfitness for employment of any kind. The boys are cunning and precocious for their years." On the other hand, he has met Workhouse "school girls as good and virtuous and intelligent as could be met anywhere, owing, probably, to zealous and exemplary teachers." The opinion of (C. 9.) will be found in his letter in the Appendix.

The 10th question touches the system in perhaps its most vital part.

10th.—In case of young girls under eighteen years of age, does Workhouse training afford a protective power, or is it an increased source of danger?

Twenty-one of the witnesses answer this question, of whom but three (A. 7., B. 29., C. 1.) speak of the Workhouse as being a protection to female virtue. The remainder condemn it more or less heartily.

(A. 3.) finds in the "training no protective power; in so polluted an atmosphere, it would be a miracle if it did."

(A. 8.) considers "Workhouse girls are more likely to be led astray."

(B. 7.) looks on the Workhouse as "a sort of maternity institution for fallen women."

(B. 10.) says the training affords no protection.

According to (B. 12.), "Danger lies in this: that, being shut out from lesser forms of temptation, which would be met with in ordinary social life, they are unprepared for worse forms when they come."

(B. 14.) finds in Workhouses "an increased source of danger."

(B. 16.) says the training "has no protective power, and that no girl should be an inmate of a Workhouse after her fifth or sixth year."

(B. 18.) says a Workhouse is "decidedly a source of danger for young girls." (Compare B. 17., page xii.)

(B. 19.) considers that "no place could be worse for young females."

(B. 24.) says that the "training is decidedly bad for girls. They are unable to protect themselves, have no self-respect, and very often turn out badly."

(B. 26.) "would dread the effect of the Workhouse upon girls of fifteen and upwards, as bringing them more or less, and unavoidably, in contact with depraved characters of their own sex."

My lay correspondent, represented by (B. 27.), declares that "It is almost a certainty of ruin. All feelings of delicacy are forgotten; the rest may be guessed."

(B. 30.) sees in it "a most undoubted source of danger."

(C. 1.) does find in it protection, but says that, "When boys and girls leave the house, and go to service, or out with their parents, they generally return worse than they went."

(C. 2.) finds it answer in his locality, the district being a manufacturing district, and girls easily placed at fourteen years of age, but says that, "in large Workhouses, there cannot be a worse place."

According to (C. 6.) "the training is an increased source of danger."

(C. 9.) says, "*It would be better for a virtuous girl under eighteen to starve than to enter a Workhouse.*" (Compare B. 20., page vi.)

(C. 11.) says that, "*at the age of fifteen, if there be not a separation from the adult class, I fear their cases are hopeless.*"

(C. 7.) sees "*in the sense of degradation*" (Compare C. 6., page viii., C. 7, page viii.; B. 31., page vi.) "*that clings to Workhouse girls a source of danger,*" and takes also a view of the case similar to that of (B. 12.)

The letter of (C. 12.) does not specially note this query; but any one who has read the extract from his letter, which I quote, in reference to the 5th query, can have no doubt as to his opinion of the probable effect of Workhouse training on the young girls subjected to it.

To sum up.

If, these forty-one witnesses, whose competence cannot be doubted, fairly indicate the opinions of the Chaplains of our Workhouses,—if it be conceded that the Chaplains of our Workhouses are competent judges of the effect of these establishments on the defenceless children of our poor,—it must be admitted, that the gigantic system presided over by the Local Government Board has not only absolutely and entirely failed as an educational agent, but that its inelastic nature incapacitates it for the task.

As a natural consequence of the system, as also as a proved matter of fact, the youth who have been assimilated by it are turned out to struggle with the difficulties of life utterly unfit to meet them. There is reason for more than fear, that at no great distance of time numbers of them, in their degradation, will be found bearing witness to this miserable fact—the young men in our prisons, the young girls on our streets.

Truly this is a strange application of nineteenth century civilization. Men have been tried and punished ere now, for shearing a sheep in undue season, and exposing it to the blasts of an inclement spring, and there is more care taken for the brute, than for the young of our own species.

Philanthropy seems to be drifting waterlogged about, with no one at the helm, and what is perhaps more strange, men of business, who value money, stand looking idly on, whilst pauperism is being made hereditary, and a permanent drain on our resources is being established by all the powers and intelligence of the State.

* APPENDIX A.

I.—My experience of Workhouses is very small, but it has left very definite impressions on my mind, particularly as to the rearing and education of children in them; and my own opinion, "*as to the results of Workhouse training in the formation of the disposition of youth,*" is borne out by that of every one, priest and layman, whom I have ever heard speak upon the subject: and that opinion is, that those results

* Letter of C. 9.

are very bad. Now, I attach great importance to that general consent of opinion. To have been reared in a Workhouse is a sufficient explanation to any one acquainted with its system of any amount of vice in a boy or girl who may have been submitted to it.

QUER. 7, 8, 9.

They acquire no habits of industry or self-reliance, but are thoroughly idle and helpless, and go to swell the number of beggars and the vicious classes of society : as a rule, they are good for nothing, and leave the Workhouse without any fitness for any employment of any kind.

They have certain habits of subordination, as far as eye-service of those over them goes, acquired by habitual dread of the Workhouse officials, whom they must obey, but they are utterly untruthful and dishonest.

Furthermore, they are very precocious. Very early in life they get a kind of childish cunning, from the habit of looking out for their own interests amongst the body of children ; and, worse than all, they become familiar with immorality at an age at which it is quite unknown to children outside.

I think that general statement, which of course must be taken as a representation of the Workhouse children as a body, with exceptions, will meet with the approval of all competent witnesses. The exceptions may arise from either individual character or the special circumstances of some Workhouse, either in its teachers or chaplains, whose efforts may counteract the tendency of the system ; but that the system of itself tends to these results, and, in fact, produces them in the larger number of children submitted to it, cannot be denied.

QUER. 3. No.

QUER. 4. Yes. Particularly in country districts, children up to nine and ten years of age are very innocent ; but they are not long in the Workhouse when they become deteriorated.

QUER. 6.

I should think them much gloomier than children outside. I cannot answer for health.

QUER. 5.

I do not know precisely what is the Workhouse regulation as to the separation of children from adults ; but I do know that, as a matter of fact, it is very ineffective, and to it some at least of the evil disposition of the children is attributable. I don't know how it can be restrained.

But there is one point bearing on this that, in my opinion, deserves attention.

A considerable number of Workhouse children are illegitimate, and of those it is not at all rare to have women with as many as four or five children of different fathers. Now, many of these women take refuge with their children in the Workhouse during the winter months, and go out in the Spring, taking with them their children, for working or begging during the warm weather, and these children become during this time quite familiar with their mothers' habits of life, and they themselves utterly demoralized. Numbers of such families, who live in habitual idleness, beggary and immorality, come together in winter in the Workhouse, and it is utterly useless to expect that

any efforts of teachers, chaplains, or others can undo the mischief which has been done, or prevent the abominable propagation of vice amongst the children themselves. Then, girls so reared, familiar with their own mother's character, reproached with it often by their fellow-children, are sent out as servants, and soon come back again to follow in their parents' footsteps.

QUER. 10.

No one with a particle of humanity in him would think of recommending a virtuous girl under eighteen years of age to enter a Workhouse, under no matter what necessity. It would be better for her starve.

QUER. 2.

The connection between these results and the system seems pretty clear and obvious.

The children, supposing no corrupting influence to demoralize them, are, at best, reared under a system which is artificial, without any influence of home or natural affection; and then, unlike the Orphanages or Industrial schools, in which religious fervour and devotion on the part of those who conduct them, if they do not supply, at least in great measure compensate for, the loss of the natural conditions in which children were meant by God to be reared. The Workhouse system is one of mere discipline. The teachers are nearly all good, very good, and anxious for the welfare of the children; but, at best, they can only soften, but not alter, a system which, in its construction, aims only at the maintenance of order within the house.

That of course accounts for the sullenness and gloom of the children, and also their disingenuousness and lying, which they practice to escape censure from the officers. Then, children at home gradually come to assist their parents both in domestic economy and out-door work, but as a rule Workhouse children know nothing of such employment.

But worse than all is the bad moral atmosphere which pervades the Workhouse, and taints almost everyone in it. It is the cesspool of its district; there all helpless immorality gathers, and it is impossible for children to escape its influence.

I do not know any greater wrong, than to rear children in such places. It would be a blessed reform, the effects of which would very soon be seen, if they were protected from it.

QUER. 11.

I don't well understand this. Taking it to mean that the Poor Law Guardians supply the funds out of the poor rates for the rearing of those children, how could it be done outside of Workhouses without a departure from the fundamental principles on which Poor Law relief is given?

If it were considered undesirable to send the children of the Workhouses into the Industrial Schools already established, then I think either of two courses might be followed.

The children of each Workhouse might be reared by themselves, totally apart from the adults, and with increased power on the part of the Guardians, and corresponding restriction of parental rights,—the Guardians to vote the money for such schools in which an

industrial training should be given to the children, and the duty of fixing the liability for the child's maintenance on putative father to be transferred from the Guardians to the police of the district; all children once sent into such school to remain there, except by order of magistrates, signed in petty sessions, on the application of some interested party, up to an age to be fixed, say fourteen or sixteen YEARS.

Such schools would be a little more expensive than the present system, but, on the other hand, they would soon contribute to their own support, besides the obvious advantage of giving an industrial training to the children. (Compare B. 16, 17, 18, page vi., C. 12., page ix.)

Two points in the above suggestion deserve special attention.

FIRST—The power, with the reservation made, given to the Guardians of withdrawing the children from their parents' control. (That I think essential to any scheme of reform.) If bad mothers can take their children about the country with them for months at a time, while they, the mothers, are leading an infamous life, it is impossible to do any good for the children. On the other hand, it is well known that nothing would give greater satisfaction to such mothers than to relieve them of the burden of their children. For this reason, the children should remain under the mothers' charge up to seven years of age at least. That in itself would be a deterrent against immorality; but, furthermore, the police should be invested with the right to seek out putative fathers, and make them chargeable for the support of the children while they were maintained by the poor rates. It is well known that this duty is not discharged by the Guardians. The amount of money spent annually in the support of illegitimate children of Poor Law Unions in cases in which the putative fathers could, with an honest effort, be made liable is very great; and if such children were to be kept in Industrial Schools at the cost of the ratepayers, I think the right to recover some contribution to the support ought to be given to a body who would exercise it independently.

SECONDLY—It would, perhaps, be possible to establish Central Training Schools for the Workhouse children of several Unions. In case an amalgamation of Workhouses took place, then some of the existing houses might be made available for Workhouse Industrial Schools, and the guardians of the different Unions might have the power of committing children to them on paying a certain capitation charge. But in this case, too, the parent or next of kin should always have the right to claim the discharge of the child before magistrates at petty sessions, and of course the Guardians should always have the right to order the discharge of a child whose parent, or parents, were able to support it, and some one or other should see to enforce the claim of the union against the parties liable for the child's maintenance.

In this way, there would be only infant schools connected with Workhouses, and all children, say of seven years or more, would receive an industrial education away from the Workhouse and their parents.

APPENDIX B.

*Runnamoat, Roscommon,
July 10th, 1878.*

MY LORD,

I believe it is generally felt that, from a social, if not a religious point of view, the Educational Training of pauper children in Workhouses is of a very hopeless character, and that it would be a humane, as well as a wise, policy to subject these children to Industrial Training.

The question of the amalgamation of Unions, which is now in some shape or form being inquired into, bears upon this question ; because, if it can be shown that, without inconvenience to the poor, a considerable number of Workhouses can be closed which now entail a considerable and useless expenditure, then, those who desire for the children of the destitute Industrial Training apart from Workhouse influences, will be able to point to these houses as ready for the reception of the children, and will be fairly able to claim that the money saved be devoted to so eminently useful a purpose.

I hope to be able to show, within the compass of a short pamphlet, that not only can many Workhouses be closed without injury to the poor, and utilized for the higher purpose I have indicated, but that the re-adjustment which would become necessary can be made to issue in a more economical, as well as a more useful, application of public money ; that it can be availed of to improve the system of control over expenditure ; and that last, not least, it can be taken advantage of to purify and improve the present electoral system for Poor Law purposes, in a sense both practical and popular, and that these things can be done without dislocation of the existing Poor Law system.

The early promise, or the cause for anxiety which attended the opening struggles of those who have been launched on the world from Reformatory or Industrial Schools has been carefully noted. No such solicitude, or curiosity, whichever it may be deemed, has been shown in the case of liberated pauper youths—society turns them loose on the world to take their chance, and thinks, and wrongly thinks, that it has done with them,—for the moment they have ceased to be a burden on the rates it is enough.

In their case therefore, direct evidence cannot be brought forward. The next best thing, then, is to become possessed of the opinions of persons whose business it has been for some years past to watch, if possible to guide, the development of Workhouse youths—persons who are not dependent on the poor rates for their means of livelihood, and whose evidence, from the tenor and business of their lives, must be above suspicion.

It is to obtain this evidence, with the object of guiding public opinion in its verdict, that I seek your Lordship's help.

If your Lordship is pleased to give my project your countenance, I will ask you to authorise me to apply to such of your clergy as have been Chaplains of Workhouses, for the favor of their opinions as to the result of Workhouse Training ; I will further ask you to recom-

mend to their favourable notice the circular of inquiry which I shall shortly send to them.

I have the honour to be, my Lord,

Your Lordship's very faithful Servant,

C. RALEIGH CHICHESTER.

To the Rev.
 Lord Bishop of

The following Prelates authorised me to apply to Chaplains in their Diocese :—

CHURCH OF IRELAND :

The Rt. Reverend the Bishop of Meath,
The Rt. Reverend the Bishop of Down,
The Rt. Reverend the Bishop of Tuam,
The Rt. Reverend the Bishop of Kilmore,
The Rt. Reverend the Bishop of Cashel.

ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH :

Most Rev. Dr. M'Gettigan, Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of all Ireland ;
Most Rev. Dr. Croke, Archbishop of Cashel ;
Most Rev. Dr. Nulty, Bishop of Meath ;
Most Rev. Dr. M'Cabe, Vicar-Capitular of Dublin ;
Most Rev. Dr. Moran, Bishop of Ossory ;
Most Rev. Dr. M'Cormack, Bishop of Achonry ;
Most Rev. Dr. Gillooly, Bishop of Elphin.

His Eminence, the late lamented Cardinal, wrote to say "*he regretted the state of his health prevented his giving any assistance in so important a business.*"

APPENDIX C.

Extract from the DAILY EXPRESS of August 13th.

INDUSTRIAL AND WORKHOUSE SCHOOLS.

Colonel C. Raleigh Chichester, of Runnamoat, Roscommon, who has taken an active interest in the discussion of the questions of Poor Law Union Amalgamation and Industrial Schools, is at present engaged in eliciting the opinions of Protestant and Roman Catholic Prelates, Chaplains, and others competent to judge by experience as to the relative merits of Industrial and Workhouse Schools. The following letters have been received from the Bishop of Kilmore and Dr. Gillooly, Roman Catholic Bishop of Sligo :—

*Kilmore House, Cavan,
July 22nd, 1878.*

My dear Col. Chichester,—I have received your circular, sent me by General Mitchell. I fully approve of the object you have in view—viz., that the children of the destitute should receive Industrial Training apart from Workhouse influence.

I have had some experience in this matter, having been the Protestant Chaplain of the Longford Union for eight years.

I have much pleasure in authorising you to apply to such of my clergy as have been, or are, Chaplains of Workhouses, for their opinions as to the result of Workhouse Training, and I recommend to their favourable notices the circular of inquiry which you will shortly send them.—Believe me, very sincerely yours,

JOHN R. KILMORE.

I wish you every success in your excellent undertaking.

N.B.—Permission to publish, dated August 5th.

Sligo, July 11th, 1878.

My dear Col. Chichester,—I have read over your two circulars, and have much pleasure in expressing my approval of them. I hope you will get the information you desire. The Workhouse Chaplains in this diocese will cheerfully supply it.

Wishing your efforts the fullest success, I remain, faithfully yours,

† L. GILLOOLY.

Permission to publish, dated July 29th.

Favourable replies have also been received from the Bishops of Tuam and Down, Cardinal Cullen, Most Rev. Dr. Croke, Roman Catholic Archbishop (Cashel), and others. The Time is opportune for discussing the subject, which, we need hardly say, is one of great importance, both in a social and moral point of view.

APPENDIX D.

*Runnamoat, Roscommon,
July 26th, 1878.*

REVEREND SIR,

The result of the Training pursued in Industrial and Reformatory Schools has been watched and tabulated with intelligent and benevolent care by the Inspector of these schools, in his valuable annual reports, and is admittedly a success.

This being so, a desire has naturally sprung up to compare such success with the results of the Training obtainable under our Workhouse system.

Owing, however, to the absence of any record, either of the out-set or of the subsequent career, of the youth cast loose year by year from our Workhouses, such comparison is defective and unsatisfactory.

If, however, in the absence of direct evidence, we could get at the opinions of persons conversant with the daily life of these institutions,—men not likely to have any very decided prejudices for, or against them,—men who are at home with the poor, and able to judge of the effect produced upon the poor by anything outside their usual habits of life,—then, indeed, we should be able to judge of the utility or the reverse of Workhouse Training, with a conviction of truth, and a satisfaction of mind, which the most full and most direct evidence could hardly make more complete.

Chaplains of Workhouses seem to me such persons, and to be the only body of men who collectively fulfil the necessary conditions.

And it is to get at such evidence, or such opinions, that the labour of these circulars has been undertaken.

I have it in contemplation, to issue a short pamphlet on the subject of our Workhouses, in which the question of Workhouse Teaching will be considered, with greater or less completeness, according to the assistance which I may receive.

A complete list of those who may be good enough to give me the aid of their views will be published, together with a summary of, a detail of, or extracts from, their opinions, as circumstances may seem to recommend.

I am honoured with the permission of
to put myself in communication with

I shall deem it a further honour if you will give me your views on the interesting subject of Workhouse Training.

For convenience of reply, I have drawn up some questions (sub-joined), which are, I hope, suggestive, without being coercive. Your own experience, Reverend Sir, will doubtless suggest to you points which have escaped my lesser knowledge. Any information or opinions which you may favour me with will be thankfully received.

As it is very possible you may wish some portion of any communication you may favour me with to be considered confidential, be good enough to mark such portions, so that there may be no danger of my using any part of your letter in a way not designed by you.

I have the honour to be, yours faithfully,

C. RALEIGH CHICHESTER.

QUERIES.

1. What in a general way is your opinion as to the results of Workhouse Training in the formation of the disposition of youth, having regard not only to the actual school teaching, but to the effect of the general atmosphere and surroundings of the place?
2. Can you trace anything which may be to be regretted to anything incidental to the Workhouse system?
3. Are children coming into the house at, say the age of eight and over, likely to affect injuriously the tone of those who have been reared from infancy in it?
4. On the other hand, are they likely to suffer from contact with those who have been so reared?
5. To what extent are the children in contact with adult paupers? Is such intercourse useful or otherwise? If otherwise, within what limits can it be restrained?
6. Is it the result of your observation that Workhouse children have less, or as much, or more, of the life and energy natural to children, than those who have had to struggle with poverty outside? Are they, by comparison with children outside, more or less healthy?
7. Do they acquire habits of industry and self-reliance equal to, greater than, or less than, those acquired by children who live in poverty outside?
8. Do they appear to have acquired habits of subordination, honesty and thrift?
9. Do they leave the Workhouse with any special fitness for employment as labourers, servants, or mechanics?
10. In case of young girls under eighteen years of age, does Workhouse Training afford a protective power, or is it an increased source of danger?
11. In case, in your opinion, Workhouse Training has proved a failure, can you suggest a mode by which, without stepping outside the Poor Law system, it can be made effective for good?

Extracts from the letters of the following gentlemen are to be found in the digest of evidence :—

PRESBYTERIANS :

A. 1.	Rev. Joseph Mackenzie,	-	Chaplain to Belfast Workhouse ;
2.	Rev. David M'Meekin, -	do	Ballymena do
3.	Rev. W. A. Russell, -	do	Strabane do
5.	Rev. Oliver Leitch, -	do	Letterkenny do
7.	Rev. Geo. Nesbitt, -	do	Kilkeel do
8.	Rev. Geo. MacFarland, -	do	Ballycastle do

CHURCH OF IRELAND :

B. 4.	Rev. W. Sandford, A.M.,	-	Chaplain to Clonmel Workhouse ;
7.	Rev. W. C. Ledger, A.M.,	do	Lisnaskea do
10.	Rev. Wm. C. Townsend, A.M.,	do	Castlebar do
11.	Rev. Robert Bell, D.D.,	do	Tipperary do
*12.	V. Rev. Wm. Pakenham Walsh,	do	Cashel do
14.	Rev. F. Foster, A.B., -	do	Granard do
15.	Rev. G. Craig, A.M., -	do	Tullamore do
16.	Rev. T. Marshall, A.M.,	do	Dunshaughlin do
17.	Rev. S. G. Cochrane, -	do	Ballyshannon do
18.	Rev. E. Bredin, A.M., -	do	Donaghmore do
19.	Rev. A. J. Moore, A.M.,	do	Lurgan do
20.	Rev. S. R. Wills, A.M., -	do	Rathkeale do
23.	Rev. P. Dwyer, A.B., -	do	Ennis do
24.	Rev. J. O'Hara, A.M., -	do	Coleraine do
26.	Rev. R. Chester, A.B., -	do	Midleton do
27.	Favoured by Rev. J. Archer, A.B.,		Drogheda
28.	Rev. J. K. Latham, A.M., -	do	Wexford do
29.	Rev. T. Long, A.M., -	do	North Dublin do
†30.	Rev. J. Peed, A.B., (lately), -	do	Wexford do
31.	Rev. H. W. White, A.M., -	do	Navan do
32.	Rev. J. G. Holmes, -	do	Antrim do

ROMAN CATHOLICS :

c. 1.	Rev. Stephen Morrissey,	-	Chaplain to Naas Workhouse ;
2.	Rev. J. Donovan, P.P., -	do	Celbridge do
3.	Rev. H. Gately, Roscommon ;		
4.	Very Rev. Canon Quinn, P.P.,		Chaplain to Athy Workhouse ;
5.	Rev. James Doyle,	} Athy ;	
	Rev. J. Brennan,		
	Rev. John Staples,		
6.	Rev. James Cantwell, Adm.,	Chaplain to Thurles Workhouse ;	
7.	Rev. James Casey, Adm., formerly	do Sligo	do
8.	Peter O'Connor, Esq., J.P.,	Cairnsfoot, Sligo ;	
9.	Rev. E. J. O'Dwyer, St. Michael's,	Limerick ;	
10.	Very Rev. R. B. O'Brien, D.D., V.G.,	Chaplain to Newcastle Workhouse ;	
11.	J. O'Shaughnessy, Esq., M.D., J.P.,	Limerick ;	
12.	Rev. P. Irwin, P.P.,	Enniscrone.	

* Now Bishop of Ossory.

† Thirteen years experience as Chaplain.

APPENDIX E.

*Passage West, Cork,
January 13th, 1879.*

DEAR COLONEL CHICHESTER,—I have to acknowledge with many thanks your interesting and instructive list of queries connected with the education and general treatment of the children in our workhouses, and in accordance with your request, I willingly place at your disposal my opinion, as regards the difficulties of making those institutions suitable for the proper religious, moral, and industrial training of children, which may be summed up in a few words, namely: workhouses being the only place of refuge for all the various criminal characters of the country who are not in prison, including prostitutes and drunkards, the children in those establishments must of necessity be contaminated by mixing with those classes. It is practically impossible to keep the children always separate from the adult classes, since the parents must see their offspring at fixed periods. Then again, the continual admission of children who lead a life of crime outside the house must from the necessity of intermixture also contaminate the children in the house.

Independent of the children, there is a younger class to which public attention has not been sufficiently attracted; I allude to the suckling infants. Their case is simply hopeless. The treatment of them in workhouses is a species of refined cruelty, ending to a large extent in death or in dragging out a miserable existence in hospital until death removes them; the outside world is altogether ignorant of their unhappy state, and public attention requires to be called to the subject. One medical officer in his work "On Workhouse Life" states that "they die off like bubbles on the stream." A Poor Law Inspector reported to the Local Government Board in 1873, that out of 47 infants admitted to the Tralee Union between 1862 and 1872, 46 died, and, to my own knowledge, 33 per cent. of infants admitted during the year 1874 as healthy into the Cork Workhouse died within twelve months. These statements were repeatedly brought under the notice of the Local Government Board with the view of their making an inquiry into the subject. Up to the present I cannot induce them to do so. I may add that since 1857 I have made the system of administration of the Poor Law in workhouses a special study, being an elected Guardian up to the present for the Cork Union, one of the largest in Ireland.

I shall be happy to supply you with any further particulars in my power.

Very faithfully yours,
WM. D'ESTERRE PARKER.

Colonel Chichester, D.L.,
Runnamoate, Roscommon.

APPENDIX F.

RETURN TO AN ORDER OF THE HONOURABLE THE HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Dated 12 April 1878;—for

RETURN of each UNION WORKHOUSE in *Ireland*, showing the total Number of PAUPERS it is capable of containing, and also the Average Number of PAUPERS actually in the UNION WORKHOUSE during the Year 1877.

PROVINCE OF ULSTER.

COUNTY.	UNION WORKHOUSE.		Total Accommodation.*	Average Number accommodated during 1877.	Under 100	Under 200	Under 300 and over 100	Under 400 and over 300	Under 500 and over 400	Under 1000 and over 500	Over 2000
ANTRIM	Antrim	.	841	230	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
	Ballycastle	.	567	99	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Ballymena	.	1,206	288	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
	Ballymoney	.	1,755	122	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Belfast	.	3,361	1,904	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Larne	.	709	203	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Lisburn	.	1,040	230	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
ARMAGH	Armagh	.	1,034	279	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Lurgan	.	1,238	356	-	-	1	1	-	-	-
CAVAN	Bailieborough	.	696	131	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Bawnboy	.	554	86	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Cavan	.	1,234	258	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Cootehill	.	818	102	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
	Ballyshannon	.	661	148	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
DONEGAL	Donegal	.	631	97	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
	Dunfanaghy	.	479	32	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Glenties	.	565	105	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Inishowen	.	667	143	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
	Letterkenny	.	658	94	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Milford	.	600	71	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Stranorlar	.	658	58	1	-	-	-	-	-	-

DOWN	1,099	243	13	13	13	4	-	1
Banbridge	1,033	220	-	-	-	-	-	-
Downpatrick	382	81	1	-	-	-	-	-
Kilkeel	1,046	335	-	-	-	-	-	-
Newry	1,262	363	-	-	-	-	-	-
Newtownards			5					
Enniskillen	941	269	-	-	-	-	-	-
Irvinestown	536	101	-	-	-	-	-	-
Lisnaskea	706	70	3					
Coleraine	815	219	-	-	-	-	-	-
Limavady	701	132	-	-	-	-	-	-
Londonderry	814	330	-	-	-	-	-	-
Magherafelt	858	202	4					
Carrickmacross	1,042	112	-	-	-	-	-	-
Castleblayney	1,036	158	-	-	-	-	-	-
Clones	644	79	-	-	-	-	-	-
Monaghan	1,092	149	4					
Castlederg	302	69	-	-	-	-	-	-
Clogher	825	118	-	-	-	-	-	-
Cookstown	650	98	-	-	-	-	-	-
Dungannon	945	193	-	-	-	-	-	-
Gortin	354	50	-	-	-	-	-	-
Omagh	820	204	-	-	-	-	-	-
Strabane	886	235	7					
TOTAL ULSTER	37,761	9,066						

* See note on p. .

PROVINCE OF MUNSTER.

xxviii

COUNTY.	UNION WORKHOUSE.	Total Accommodation.*	Average Number accommodated during 1877.	Under 100	Under 200 and over 100	Under 300 and over 200	Under 400 and over 300	Under 500 and over 400	Under 1000 and over 500	Under 2000 and over 1000	Over 2000
CLARE,	Ballyvaughan	374	160	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Corrofin	543	133	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Ennis	1,344	404	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-
	Ennistymon	895	245	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Killadyserf	607	152	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Kilrush	1,471	314	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
	Scariff	1,324	179	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Tulla	522	221	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
CORK,	Bandon	1,008	188	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Bantry	770	99	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Castletown	566	157	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Clonakilty	807	244	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
	Cork	3,191	2,159	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
	Dunmanway	631	158	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Fermoy	735	302	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
	Kanturk	1,111	387	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
	Kinsale	656	136	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Macroon	703	262	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
	Mallow	905	369	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
	Midleton	873	310	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
	Millstreet	948	244	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
	Mitchelstown	585	218	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
	Skibbereen	829	315	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Skull	521	90	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Youghal	1,269	236	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-

KERRY,	Caherciveen	512	108	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
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* See note on p. 5.

PROVINCE OF LEINSTER.

COUNTY.	UNION WORKHOUSE.					Total Accommodation.*	Average Number accommodated during 1877.	Under 100	Under 200 and over 100	Under 300 and over 200	Under 400 and over 300	Under 500 and over 400	Under 1000 and over 500	Under 2000 and over 1000	Over 2000
CARLOW	1	962	367	-	-	-	1				
DUBLIN	620	120	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
	2,513	2,004	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
	3,382	2,630	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
	4	1,284	541	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
KILDARE	832	266	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	
	656	159	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	
	3	923	324	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	
KILKENNY	1,133	277	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	
	620	138	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	
	1,474	486	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	1,008	212	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	
	5	583	144	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	
KING'S	925	172	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	
	702	237	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	3	1,086	304	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	

[illegible]

* See note on page 5.

PROVINCE OF CONNAUGHT.

xxxii

COUNTY.	UNION WORKHOUSE.	Total Accommodation.*	Average Number accommodated during 1877.	Under 100	Under 200 and over 100	Under 300 and over 200	Under 400 and over 300	Under 500 and over 400	Under 1000 and over 500	Under 2000 and over 1000	Over 2000
GALWAY	Ballinasloe . . .	1,359	243	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Clifden . . .	822	114	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Galway . . .	1,082	374	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
	Glennamaddy . . .	592	106	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Gort . . .	780	177	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Loughrea . . .	818	110	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Mount Bellew . . .	556	98	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Oughterard . . .	880	76	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Portumna . . .	576	138	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Tuam . . .	865	210	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
LEITRIM	Carrick-on-Shannon . . .	793	170	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Manorhamilton . . .	809	116	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Mohil . . .	719	170	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
MAYO	Ballina . . .	1,078	139	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Ballinrobe . . .	644	198	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Belmullet . . .	325	137	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Castlebar . . .	746	110	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Claremorris . . .	632	144	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Killala . . .	415	73	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Newport . . .	455	80	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Swineford . . .	788	170	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Westport . . .	1,173	135	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
ROSCOMMON	Boyle . . .	686	213	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
	Castlereagh . . .	868	178	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Roscommon . . .	851	283	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
	Strokestown . . .	636	172	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-

APPENDIX G.

RETURN TO AN ORDER OF THE HONOURABLE THE HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Dated 12 April, 1878;—for

RETURNS “of Average Number of PAUPER CHILDREN in each UNION WORKHOUSE in *Ireland*, during 1877;”
 “And, of Average Number of IDIOTS or IMBECILES and HARMLESS LUNATICS, stating the Average Cost of
 MAINTENANCE in each WORKHOUSE, in the following Tabular Form :—

SUMMARY OF PROVINCES.

	Under 15 Years of Age.			Idiots, Imbeciles.			Harmless Lunatics.			Average Weekly Cost of Maintenance per Head.
	Male.	Female.	Total.	Male.	Female.	Total.	Male.	Female.	Total.	
ULSTER	1,568	1,483	3,051	164	241	405	161	238	399	2 5 $\frac{3}{4}$
MUNSTER	2,501	2,517	5,018	193	300	493	146	334	480	2 11
LEINSTER	1,711	1,775	3,486	229	307	536	222	349	571	3 5 $\frac{1}{4}$
CONNAUGHT	744	774	1,518	96	125	221	40	63	103	2 11 $\frac{1}{2}$
TOTAL IRELAND	6,524	6,549	13,073	682	973	1,655	569	984	1,553	2 11 $\frac{1}{4}$

APPENDIX H.

Name of Certain Unions.	Capacity Part. return 1878.	Average No. of Inmates. 1877.	Excess of av. Room 1877.	Area in Statute Acres.	Valuation in 1876.	Population in 1871.	REMARKS.
North Dublin	2,513	2,004	509	40,769	358,002	158,425	<p>Leaving out of calculation the Unions here specifically named, and deducting 49 from the remaining 149, the 100 areas left to be divided would average 184,090 statute acres. This area is exceeded by 18 Unions now in existence, of which</p> <p>7 in Leinster. 5 " Munster. 2 " Ulster. 4 " Connaught.</p> <p>— Total, 18</p>
South Dublin	3,382	2,630	752	48,089	618,175	175,180	
Belfast	3,361	1,904	1,457	47,812	606,437	202,591	
Cork	3,191	2,159	1,032	169,732	338,407	143,377	
Limerick	2,278	1,413	865	177,951	194,537	79,248	
Total 5 Urban houses	14,725	10,110	4,615	125,650	11,506	16,477	
Dunfanagher	479	32	447	257,429	20,051	37,930	
Glenties	565	105	460	177,933	10,940	15,758	
Belmullet	325	137	188	192,965	17,756	25,231	
Clifden	822	114	708	221,847	85,930	49,831	
Tralee	949	497	452	125,279	22,754	20,245	
Dingle	1,224	153	1,071	197,545	22,621	25,148	
Cahiriveen	512	108	404	73,445	14,053	14,326	
Castletown	566	157	409	57,169	15,185	13,139	
Skull	521	90	431	18,409,028	11,176,298	4,435,471	
Other 149 Unions	126,534	32,130	94,404				
Totals	147,222	43,633	103,589	20,322,643	13,512,652	5,412,377	

Houses of the Oireachtas