

POLITICAL MEDICINE;

BEING THE SUBSTANCE OF

A DISCOURSE

LATELY DELIVERED BEFORE THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS IN IRELAND,

ON

MEDICINE, CONSIDERED IN ITS RELATIONS TO GOVERNMENT
AND LEGISLATION.

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TO THE MOST NOBLE

THE MARQUIS OF NORMANBY,

&c. &c. &c.

MY LORD,

I TAKE the liberty of addressing to you the following observations, as a mark of the sense I entertain (in common with the body before whom they were pronounced) of the advantages conferred upon the medical profession in Ireland, by your Lordship's countenance of the Royal College of Surgeons, in their efforts at reviving a taste for the higher departments of medicine, by bringing them in a popular form before their fellow-citizens.

Your Lordship's attendance at the evening meetings of the College (where no subject connected with mere practice was introduced) will long be remembered by us; and I have little doubt of its producing a lasting influence upon our views, could we indulge the hope that the impression of our being something more than mere servants of the sick would remain permanent upon your Lordship's mind, and be entertained in that of your successor in the government of Ireland.

iv.

I know not if this tribute will be considered more or less valuable as coming from one whose principles have always led him, in his humble sphere, to adopt a line of politics different from that of the government of which your Lordship is a member. It is, at all events, given in sincerity, by

Your Lordship's

Most obedient servant,

HENRY MAUNSELL.

Molesworth-street,
March, 1839.

POLITICAL MEDICINE.

IT cannot but be matter of regret, to those who desire the progress of civilization and the welfare of the human race, to observe the gradual declension which the art of medicine has suffered in public estimation during late years. That such a declension has, however, taken place, will not be denied by any who are acquainted with the history of medicine, and of its cultivation, during the past and present centuries; and to such it must be matter of painful interest to inquire into the causes of this backward movement, and the means, if any, of checking its course. It is with the view of commencing this inquiry that I have undertaken to bring before the public the following brief and imperfect observations, upon a subject which, in default of a better and more precise name, I shall denominate POLITICAL MEDICINE.

This name will, no doubt, be exposed to many criticisms, and may, probably, be considered, by those unable or unwilling to enter into the views which have induced me to adopt it, as an inadmissible novelty. To the same individuals the principles and opinions which I mean to designate by it will, I have

no doubt, also appear novel, strange, and, perhaps, revolutionary and dangerous. In exculpation of myself I can only say, that any appearance of novelty in the doctrines which I am about to bring forward is occasioned solely by the neglect of the subjects to which they refer during late years; they would not have been novel in those days when a Pringle, a Sloane, or a Banks graced the chair of the Royal Society, and, by their occupation of it, not only shed lustre upon that dignified body, but served the cause of humanity throughout the whole world; they would not have been strange when the first of those illustrious men, in his capacity as head and organ of that society, put the simple but affecting question, "What inquiry can be so useful as that which hath for its object the saving the lives of men?" No, the truth must be told; the strangeness is not to be found in the doctrines themselves, but in the fact, of the leading medical men of the present day having abandoned the higher and more honorable walks of their profession, to pursue, *exclusively*, the less exalted, though more profitable trade of the empirical curing of disease. We should now, even among the highest practising members of the medical profession, seek in vain for one solitary representative of the Meads, the Linds, the Pringles, the Jenners, or the Blanes of the past age. Can it be wondered at, then, that public estimation should be lowered towards a profession whose leaders have, in a very few years, sunk from the position of philosophers and politicians (I use the word in its extended sense) into that of professional traders?

Can it be matter of surprise, that the profession should have lost its ancient and respectable tone, or that its younger members should suffer under the withdrawal of public respect and support? We have now no president of the Royal Society among us. How, indeed, could we? The time and labour which would be required to attain such honorable distinction, are now more profitably employed in driving with ostentatious hurry through the streets, and in courting the favour of nurses, apothecaries, and other menial attendants of the sick.

There are two characters in which medical men commonly appear before the public. In the one, they come forward as cultivators of various sciences collateral with that of medicine; as, for example, Anatomy, Physiology, Natural History, Physics, Chemistry, Botany, &c. No class of men have more successfully or creditably cultivated these departments of knowledge than gentlemen of the medical profession; and the reputation which they have honestly and laboriously gained in such pursuits, has not been without its effect in raising their calling in the public estimation, and conferring upon themselves the character of public benefactors. These sciences, however, are *not* medicine; they are, indeed, essential for building up medical knowledge, still, they are but the roots of medicine, and are of equal, if not greater, advantage to mankind in other departments, by aiding in the provision of necessaries and comforts, which, if not more intrinsically valuable than remedies for disease, are,

at least, more agreeable and attractive. Thus, Chemistry, considered in relation to medicine, suggests, probably, the idea of a bitter nauseous salt; while, when thought of in connexion with the arts, it brings before our minds the brilliant colours of the various fabrics of dress and ornament, and the grateful products of fermentation. Examples might be multiplied were it necessary, but the truth of the position is too obvious to require me to do so.

Such is one line of operation in which medical men are known. The second is that in which they appear as practitioners and curers of diseases; and so render, both in private practice and the public employment, valuable services to individuals. Under both these circumstances, they are obviously but the servants of individuals; useful and valuable, indeed, while danger is present and pain endures, but held in no proportionate estimation when the one is averted or the other abates.

Medicine *has*, however, a third position, and it is to it that I am now anxious to point, in which she is neither a menial servant, as in the last mentioned case, nor dependant for her dignity upon collateral sciences, as in the former; she uses those sciences, no doubt, and would be powerless without their aid, but the skill by which she guides them into useful operation is distinctively her own.

Medicine assumes this character when she abandons the service of individuals, and the mere *cure* or *alleviation* of disease, and aims at the higher object of protecting the public health, and providing for the physical well being of the human race. The medical

art only ceases to be empirical when it becomes applicable to the general good of the community, and no longer confines itself to the relief of private suffering.

Let us inquire how medicine thus operates, or ought to operate. It would be impossible, within the limits to which I mean, at present, to confine myself, to go at any length into this subject; to do so would be to write a system of Medical Police; but let us take at random, from our own institutions, a few instances in which this extended application of medical knowledge has been, or may be, useful. I say, *may be*, for, in these matters, we have as yet attained but the vestibule of knowledge; and, although we may be able to point in the direction where truth is to be found, we have still many wearying obstacles to pass before we can hope to come near it.

Among the first, and most important, of the subjects in which *Political Medicine* has been usefully employed, is that of VACCINATION. It is not my intention to go at any length into the controversy, which has been lately got up by designing individuals, upon the merits of this singular discovery; its advantages have been long since universally acknowledged and admitted by the common sense of mankind, and any lengthened attempt at setting them in a stronger light would be little less absurd than to enter upon a serious chain of argument to prove the value to commerce of the mariner's needle or the steam engine. Although the discovery itself, however, may not now want confirmation to our judgments, it cannot but serve our hearts to contemplate its magnitude, and to endeavour to ap-

preciate the greatness of the blessing which Jenner was the fortunate instrument of conferring upon his species.

From an examination of the London bills of mortality, during a period of forty-two years, Dr. Jurin found, that one in fourteen of all who were born died of small-pox; by Frank, Süssmilch, and Black, the general mortality of the human race from this disease was estimated at about eight or nine per cent. DuVillard states, that of 100 born, only four reached the age of thirty without undergoing small-pox, and that the mortality among adults affected was one in seven or eight, but among infants so much as one in three. For the purpose of comparing the effects of small-pox inoculation, and of vaccination, with the unchecked effects of natural small-pox, Sir G. Blane has constructed, from the bills of mortality, four tables of periods of fifteen years each, showing the ratio borne by the mortality of small-pox to the total mortality. These are as follow:—In the first period, which was that immediately preceding the introduction of small-pox inoculation,

From 1706 to 1720, the proportion was one in 12.7 or 78 in 1000. In the second and third periods, when inoculation had made considerable progress, the proportions were,

From 1745 to 1759, 1 in 11.2 or 89 in 1000.

From 1784 to 1798, 1 in 11 or 90 in 1000.

In the fourth period, when vaccination had been some years in use:

From 1804 to 1818, only 1 in 18.9 or 53 in 1000.

By calculations founded upon these tables, Sir G. Blane has estimated the saving of lives, during the latter fifteen years, in London alone, at 23,134, a result very gratifying, but still alloyed by the reflection, that it is but a fragment of the good that might have been done, were it not for our own almost national caprice, and childish refusal of the slight constraint upon personal liberty that would accrue from the legal enforcement of vaccination. From Sweden, for example, where the authority of government is interposed in favour of the measure, we are favoured with the following interesting document:

In the year 1779 small-pox destroyed 15,000 persons.

1784	...	...	...	12,000
1800	...	...	...	12,800
1801	...	...	...	6,000
1822	...	...	...	11
1823	...	...	...	37

In Prussia also, (according to Dr. Casper), the most marked advantages have followed the introduction of vaccination. In the years 1820 and 1821, the deaths from small-pox were 3137 in a population of twenty-three millions, making one in 7204 inhabitants. In Berlin alone, the average annual number of deaths from small-pox during the twenty years preceding 1802, was 472; during twenty years succeeding 1802, it was 175; since 1812 it amounted only to 50; since 1817, to 12; and in 1821 and 1822, there was only one death from this cause in each year. During the ten years preceding 1823, the deaths from small-pox, compared to every 1000 births, were as nine; before the

introduction of cow-pox, they were as eighty-three; whence it would appear, that seventy-four lives in every 1000 were preserved by vaccination.

But it is superfluous to multiply these statements; the foregoing have been taken almost at random from the chaos of records upon the subject, existing in every journal, in almost every language; and, surely, to use the enthusiastic words of Blane, "These are benefits which could never have been dreamt of by the most sanguine philanthropist, and which must overwhelm us with a sense of unrequitable obligation to the individual who first disclosed and promulgated the secret."

The next object of Political Medicine, to which I am desirous of directing attention, is scarcely of less importance than that of Vaccination. I allude to the improvements which have been, of late years, effected in the HEALTH OF SEAMEN. To understand the amount and scope of these, it is necessary to inquire, briefly, into the condition of the sea-service within the last century. During that period, "History," says Blane, "supplies us with many instances of naval expeditions that have been entirely frustrated by the force of disease alone." Among these may be mentioned that to Carthage, in 1741; that of the French, under D'Anville, in 1746; and that of the same nation to Louisbourg, in 1757. But, let us come a little closer, and see, even in comparatively well ordered expeditions, of almost our own time, what has been the exact state of matters in this respect. In Lord Rodney's fleet, in the year 1780-81, "there died in the course of

twelve months, on board of ships, 715 seamen and marines, of whom only 59 died in battle and of wounds; there died in the same time, in hospitals, 862; so that out of 12,109 men, which is the sum total of the complement of twenty ships of the line, there have perished, in one year, 1577, that is nearly every seventh man.* Again, in 1790, we find the loss on board three convict ships, on their voyage to New South Wales, was as follows, in the *Surprise*, 42 men; in the *Scarborough*, 68 men; and in the *Neptune*, 151 men, 11 women, and two children, the total being 274 souls.† A mortality which, Mr. Montgomery Martin justly remarks, is strikingly contrasted with the present healthiness of convict ships, Mr. Surgeon Cunningham having made four voyages to the colony, and carried out about 400 male and female convicts, without losing an individual. The state of matters appears even more frightful when we come to inquire into the mortality from particular diseases. Sir Richard Hawkins states, that *In twenty years, during which he used the sea, he could give an account of 10,000 mariners who were consumed by the scurvy alone.*‡ It is to be recollected, that this officer was not in the habit of sailing with large fleets, so that his sphere of observation must have been comparatively limited. Again, we find in Commodore Anson's ship, the *Centurion*, this formidable disease so reduced a crew of between 400 and 500 men, in the space of three months, that "the lieutenant could muster no more than two quarter-masters,

* Blane's Observations. † Martin's Brit. Colonies, vol. 4.

‡ Purchas' Pilgr. vol. 4.

and six fore-mast men, capable of working." The fate of this entire squadron is, indeed, a melancholy example of the perils of the sea-service during the last century. The united crews of the five men-of-war and the sloop composing it, amounted, in September, 1740, when it sailed from England, to 1980 men; of the ships, two, the *Severn* and *Pearl*, put back, and the *Wager* was lost; if we deduct the crews of these three vessels, amounting to 710, we have a balance of 1270 men to be accounted for. In April, 1743, that is, in two years and seven months, the consolidated remnant, mustered on board the *Centurion*, only amounted to 204 individuals; the great majority of the remainder having fallen victims to disease.

Such was, but a few years since, the condition, as to health, of the right arm of England. Let us see how it is now changed. The work was fairly commenced in 1776, when the Royal Society awarded the Copley medal, for what Sir John Pringle touchingly describes as "A concise, an artless, and an incontestable relation of the means by which, under the Divine favour, Captain Cook, with a company of 118 men, performed a voyage of three years and eighteen days, throughout all the climates, from 52° north to 71° south, with the loss of only one man by sickness." Since then, we have vessels of all kinds and sizes constantly traversing every quarter of the globe, and enduring severe hardships, yet exhibiting a smaller mortality than proportionate communities on land. If evidence of this fact be required, we have only to turn to the narratives of the various Polar expeditions; in Sir

Edward Parry's third voyage, for example, in 1824-5, but one man died out of two crews of 122 men, during a voyage of eighteen months, and in which one of the ships was lost.

But, a multiplication of such instances would be tedious ; they have now become matters of such universal notoriety as to need no formal proof. To Captain Cook's acquaintance with Political Medicine Great Britain and the world owe these inestimable advantages, which, as he himself prophetically anticipated, have made " his voyage remarkable in the opinion of every benevolent person." Into the particulars of the manner in which he sought out and removed, or warded off the causes of disease, it would be out of place to enter here ; the few pages of his own work, and of Pringle's celebrated discourse, in which they are detailed, will well repay the trouble of a careful perusal, and, indeed, contain more medical knowledge than many portly volumes boasting a more strictly professional origin. Cook's claim to the honors of medicine possessed no academic sanction, but, in judgment and in knowledge he was a true physician. In no other hands has the healing art been made the instrument of greater benefits to mankind than in his ; and truly he has had a noble reward—generations of court physicians, and other traffickers in the art of healing, have arisen, passed away, and been forgotten ; but in what civilized land is not the name of Cook—the preserver of the health of seamen—familiar as a household word ?

Following, almost as a corollary, upon this discovery of Captain Cook's, (for to it we may apply the word, even more truly than to his additions to geographical knowledge,) naturally came improvements in the HEALTH OF PRISONS; and to this subject the Political Physician can again point with satisfaction and pride. As we did in the case of seamen, it may be also well, in this instance, to point out an illustration or two of the state of health in prisons a few years since. Lord Bacon, in his Natural History, says, "The most pernicious infection, next to the plague, is the smell of the jail, when the prisoners have been long, and close, and nastily kept; whereof we have had, in our own time, experience twice or thrice, when both the judges that sat upon the bench, and numbers of those who attended the business, or were present, sickened upon it and died. Therefore, it were good wisdom, that in such cases, the jail were aired before they be brought forth." Again, in Stowe's Chronicle, we have the following account of the well-known assizes held at Oxford, in the year 1577: "On the 4th, 5th, and 6th days of July, were the assizes held at Oxon, where was arraigned and condemned *Richard Jenkins*, for a seditious tongue; at which time there arose among the people such a damp that almost all were smothered, very few escaped that were not taken..... Here died, in Oxon, 300 persons; and sickened there, but died in other places, 200 and odd." Even in the year 1750, we have an instance of jail pestilence quite as remarkable. On the 11th May, in that year, the

sessions commenced at the Old Bailey, and continued for some days. The bench consisted of six persons, viz. the Lord Mayor, three of the Judges, one of the Aldermen, and the Recorder ; of these died, Sir Samuel Pennant, Lord Mayor ; Sir Thos. Abney and Baron Clarke, Judges ; and Sir Daniel Lambert, Alderman, together with two or three of the Counsel, one of the Under-sheriffs, several of the *Middlesex* Jury, and others present, to the amount of above forty. It was remarked, that the Lord Chief Justice and the Recorder, who sat on the Lord Mayor's right hand, escaped ; whilst he himself, with the rest of the bench on his left, were seized with the infection ; that the *Middlesex* Jury, on the left side of the court, lost many ; whilst the *London* Jury, opposite to them, received no harm ; and that of the whole multitude, but one or two, or, at most, a small number of those who were on the Lord Mayor's right hand, were taken ill. This was accounted for by the fact of a window being open in such a position that the stream of air from it directed the infectious miasmata from the prisoners toward the left side of the court.

Such was the state of prisons in former days, when they formed so many nuisances, in which were reared, and from which were spread, the most deadly diseases. Even at present, the mortality in the prisons of some countries is very remarkable. In the *Depôt de Mendicité* of St Denis, at Paris, the annual mortality in 1815-18 has been stated, by M. Villermé,* to be nearly

* Des Prisons telles qu'elles sont, et telles qu'elles devraient être.
Paris, 1820.

one in three of every prisoner admitted. This statement has been commented on by the *Moniteur* ; but, even that official organ admits the mortality of the prison, in 1818, to be one in seven. In the other prisons of Paris, La Force, St. Pelagie, and the Conciergerie, the ordinary rate of deaths is about one in twenty-three annually ; and that of the prisons of the Netherlands has been stated, by M. Quetelet, at one in twenty-seven.* Now, in England, according to Dr. B. Hawkins, the average annual mortality, in the King's Bench and Fleet prisons, ranges between one in fifty and one in fifty-five ; and in the prisons of Dublin the following statement, which has been kindly furnished me by my friend Dr. Harty, shows a vastly lower rate of mortality :

The total number of deaths, in the four criminal prisons of Dublin, during the 28 years, from 1811 to 1838 inclusive, amounted to 147

The total number of committals, in the same period, was 92,000

The total number of deaths, in the two debtors' prisons, during the twenty-eight years from 1811 to 1838 inclusive, was 69

The total number of committals, during the same period, was 41,000

These results, in themselves highly creditable to the able medical officers of these establishments, (Dr. Harty and Mr. Read), when placed in contrast with similar matters in former years and in other countries, as shown above, furnish additional and irresistible

* Mem. Acad. Royale de Bruxelles.—1827.

evidence of the importance, to the whole mass of the community, of the study of *Political Medicine*. Without it, the penal institutions of the country would be now, as they were so lately as in the days of Howard, not the means of punishing crime and reclaiming criminals, but the instruments for spreading pestilence and death throughout the land.

So far I have adduced instances in which medicine, acting in her highest character, has been the instrument of conferring great and lasting benefits upon mankind. I have exhibited her in her triumphs over some of the ills to which humanity is liable. It shall now be my duty to direct attention to other subjects of her proper dominion, in which, if she has not hitherto achieved such signal victories, the failure has been less on account of her own want of power, than because of her energies not having been directed with sufficient force and authority to their object.

Among the subjects to which I allude the QUARANTINE SYSTEM stands foremost. It is not now my intention to enter into a discussion of the absolute merits or demerits of this system, as a means of preventing the spread of plague and other infectious disorders; for my present purpose it will be sufficient to show, that its administration is marked by the grossest inconsistencies; and that many of these are of such a nature as to admit of being reconciled only by the agency of *Political Medicine*.

In the first place, the policy of quarantine is clearly based upon the belief, that various diseases, and especially the plague, can be propagated by contagion,

conveyed either by means of merchandize, which has been exposed to the reception of infectious miasmata, or directly from the bodies of individuals labouring under disease. It is also assumed, that there is a latent period between the exposure of any individual to the contagion, or infection, and the development in his body of the disease. These assumptions, (neither of which I wish to be understood as denying), have led to the establishment of a probation in the case of *persons*, in order that any malady, which may be latent in their bodies, may have an opportunity of showing itself; and further, have been made the ground of detaining *goods and merchandize* arriving from suspected places, and subjecting them to what is considered a purification, before their admission into the market. In foreign countries both these objects are generally attempted to be attained by means of lazarets or pest-houses, in which passengers can be lodged and goods stored, until the former have undergone their term of probation, and the latter have been purified, and inspected by officers appointed for the purpose. By means of these establishments, when complete and properly conducted, as, I believe is the case at Leghorn, Genoa, and Marseilles, ships are enabled to discharge their cargoes without indiscriminate intercourse with the shore, and are not detained longer than they would be were no quarantine regulations in existence. In England, strange to say, there are no lazarets, and vessels from suspected ports are obliged to perform quarantine in open roadsteads, where they are themselves exposed to all the

dangers of the sea; or in rivers or harbours,* where it is utterly impossible that intercourse between them and the shore can be effectually prevented. Now, the interruption to commerce occasioned by such regulations as I have referred to, must be grievously felt by all commercial countries; and, I think, it will scarcely be denied, that every reasonable attention ought to be given towards rendering them efficient in proportion to the weight of the burden which they impose upon trade. A very hasty glance at the actual condition of matters will, however, show us that this is not the case. Thus we find, that although the duration of a latent period of disease forms one of the two grounds for a quarantine system, still, no effort has been made to ascertain the probable length of this period; and accordingly, the number of days' quarantine varies considerably, not only in different ports, but in the same port for different ships. In Beyrout, according to Mr. Holroyd,† we have passengers coming from Alexandria, by vessels of war or H. B. M.'s steamers, put under a quarantine of fourteen days; while those arriving by merchantmen, to and from the same port, are made to perform one of twenty-one days. Again, the quarantine upon vessels from Beyrout to Alexandria, in which latter *the plague was committing much greater ravages*, was twenty-one days for passengers per steamers and men of war, and twenty-five for those per mer-

* It is, perhaps, not generally known, that quarantine is performed in Kingstown harbour.

† Letter to Sir J. C. Hobhouse, Bart. Jan. 17, 1839.

chantmen. It is also satisfactorily shown, by the same gentleman, that in most of the eastern ports, the sanitary regulations are administered very differently towards those in power and those not; that a *teskeré*, or government order, was often considered equivalent to seven days purification; and that the persons and servants of noble lords and pachas were not unusually considered as articles unsuceptible of contagion. In our own country the period of quarantine is very much at the discretion of the privy council, and, as may be supposed, is not constructed upon any well considered view of the probable duration of the latent period of disease. Even in Alexandria, the very focus of plague, Mr. Holroyd states, that he asked the British consul, Mr. Thurburn, "Has it (the board of health) made any inquiries of medical men, who have had practice in the treatment of plague, to ascertain the time which elapses between the exposure to the infection of plague and the development of the disease, preparatory to establishing quarantine? and what is his answer? Not any!" Mr. Holroyd continues, "This reply, I must say, startled me; but the answer to the next question is still more extraordinary; I ask, 'In establishing quarantine, upon what data has the board of health acted?' and I am told, upon the regulations adopted by the quarantine establishments of Europe. Now, if ever there were a place calculated for obtaining information on this subject, that place is Egypt, and especially Alexandria and Cairo." A similar course is also adopted at Malta, under our own government.

The other ground upon which the policy of quarantine is based, I have stated to be the assumption, that infection can be conveyed by means of merchandize which has been exposed to its influence. I call this an assumption; for, although I do not mean, in the present state of my knowledge, to deny its truth, still, I cannot think that it has been proved by any legitimate process of induction. If it be true, however, there is no reason whatever for supposing, that infection is more likely to be transmitted by one set of articles than another; yet we find fifty or sixty kinds of merchandize enumerated as those against which quarantine regulations are to be enforced with especial rigour. Why, for example, we may ask, is a string of beads, or a necklace, to be considered peculiarly susceptible, while the deal box, in which it is enclosed, is to be classed among articles little likely to communicate disease? Or, again, what safety is to be expected from piercing with two or three holes a compressed bale of cotton, which has been packed, perhaps, by individuals actually labouring under plague, when it is thought absolutely necessary to open and fumigate a letter which has never been near the disease? These are inconsistencies sufficient in themselves to invalidate the present practice of quarantine; they show, that it must be either totally inefficient and useless, on the one hand; or, on the other, that it is pushed, in certain cases, to an extreme, which being wholly unnecessary, and, at the same time, imposing serious restrictions upon commerce, admits of no justification. Towards the reconciliation of these incon-

sistencies I make no attempt; nor do I believe that there is yet sufficient knowledge of the subject to admit of the questions involved being settled; but I do think it must be admitted, that it is only by submitting them to the jurisdiction of *Political Medicine* that any approach to a determination of them can ever be arrived at. We find, however, from what I have already stated, that no such step has ever yet been taken. The answers of Mr Thurburn, as quoted above, are of themselves sufficient to show this; but Mr. Holroyd's and Dr. Bowring's pamphlets contain abundance of additional evidence on the subject. In Alexandria, the board of health is composed, not of medical men, but of a select number of European consuls; and, in Great Britain, the actual administration of quarantine regulations is entrusted to ordinary custom-house officers. Even the superintendent of the lazaret at Malta is a captain; and so badly and un-medically are some of these establishments managed in the east, that Dr. Bowring informs us, that, while the average mortality of plague, under good medical treatment, often does not exceed thirty per cent. yet, in the lazaret at Alexandria, ninety per cent. died in 1833, and in 1836, seventy-seven per cent. Nor is this to be wondered at, when we find the same gentleman stating, that he has seen a person, coming out of his imprisonment in the lazaret at Syra, having had his garments devoured by rats, and his person disfigured by vermin. Finally, I cannot but think, that the foregoing scanty statements are sufficient to bear out my case; and I must be permitted to express my hope,

that our government will see the necessity of taking measures to aid the formation of the Politico-Medical congress, suggested by Dr. Bulard, and now likely to be set on foot by the Czar and the King of Prussia. If such a step be sanctioned, it will be the commencement of a new era of medicine in England.

In addition to its relation to the quarantine system, the subject of EPIDEMIC DISEASES involves many other questions of great interest to the community, and which imperatively call for Politico-Medical consideration. The sources of these visitations, and the doctrine of contagion and infection, with the modes of destroying or preventing them, are still almost wholly unknown, indeed, uninvestigated, at least, systematically. Accordingly, when the country is invaded by an epidemic, all is confusion—no one knows what to do, or where to look for aid. It is no person's business to attend to such matters specially, and, as a natural result, they remain altogether unattended to for a time; until at last, when fear seizes upon the multitude, confusion is worse confounded by the eager and inconsiderate interference of an unskilful crowd. Need I name, in confirmation of this picture, the epidemic fevers of Ireland, and the recent melancholy visitation of cholera? In both, the country was so unprepared for, although, unhappily, far from being unused to such events, that the special interference of parliament was required. And when the combined wisdom of the nation *was* turned to the subject, what was the lame and impotent result? Serious as the subject is, no one, with the least capability of perceiv-

ing the ludicrous, can, for a moment, think with gravity on the course then taken to stay a formidable pestilence. Central boards of health were formed, of eminent private practitioners in medicine, many of them, indeed, possessing the indispensable requisite of a knowledge of practical medicine, but, from their very habits, unlikely to be acquainted with it in its more extended relations. These gentlemen too, fully engaged as they were in their private business, were yet expected to discharge the onerous and irksome duties of members of a board of health *without remuneration*. To ask an Old Bailey lawyer to argue a point of constitutional law, and to require him to do it without a fee, would have been wisdom in comparison with this monstrous absurdity. But this was not all; under the auspicious guidance of these central bodies, local boards of health were constructed, altogether composed of individuals unacquainted with medicine, the commencement of whose operations, when once made conscious of their authority, was, in general, marked (at least in Ireland) by a battle-royal with the district medical man; the strife commonly arising in a difference of sentiment on the nature of contagion; upon which subject, the village attorney and shopkeepers of the board of health, feeling that they were made political physicians by act of parliament, thought they had as good a right to hold an opinion as the doctor. Being the strongest and most numerous, the board commonly prevailed, and then followed a series of pranks, any thing equal to which it would be difficult for the most fertile imagination to

conceive. In a village of 200 or 300 inhabitants, seated upon a high road, I have known these sages to post pikemen at the outlets, for the purpose of preventing the passage of travellers, and to employ the police to burn articles of furniture which were being peaceably carried through the country. Of course, I need not say, that as the things I refer to happened in Ireland, the natural and necessary results were the most desperate and, often, sanguinary riots. But, to be serious; how did the country suffer from these blunders? In many towns of Ireland, (I may mention from memory, Sligo and Drogheda,) the population were more than decimated by the cholera of 1832. It will, perhaps, be argued, that things were no better in other countries, as France, where something like a Politico-Medical system does exist. To this I might reply, that the circumstances of the two countries are so different as not to admit of any fair comparison; but I do not mean to stand upon this, I can, sufficiently for my purpose, remove the objection by stating, that I am not now endeavouring to show that the system of any one country has advantages over that of any other; but merely making an abstract case in favour of *Political Medicine*, which, I hope, I have not, in the instance of epidemics, failed in doing.

ENDEMICS, or those diseases which are generated in particular localities, will be found to fall under the jurisdiction of *Political Medicine*, even in a more marked manner than that class of maladies to which I have just alluded. It will not be necessary to adduce many facts to prove, that certain diseases are con-

tracted by individuals merely in consequence of an exposure to the atmosphere, or to some other influence peculiar to certain places. The common ague of the Lincoln fens is, of itself, sufficient proof of this, even if the fatal results of the Walcheren expedition were not strong in the recollection of every Englishman. The exact cause of these phenomena is, no doubt, involved in obscurity ; but, as there is no doubt of the effect, this only renders it the more necessary that the subject should be thoroughly investigated by Political Physicians. There are, however, certain circumstances which are known, beyond all question, to give rise to endemic diseases ; and to these, strange to say, scarcely any attention has been formally paid in this country. In 1765, Pringle published the following sentiments, “ From this view of the causes of malignant fevers and fluxes, it is easy to conceive how incident they must be, not only to all marshy countries after hot seasons, but to all populous cities, low and ill-aired, unprovided with common sewers, or where the streets are narrow and foul, or the houses dirty ; where fresh water is scarce ; where jails or hospitals are crowded, and not ventilated or kept clean ; where, in sickly times, the burials are within the towns, and the bodies not laid deep ; where slaughter-houses are within the walls, or where dead animals and offals are left to rot in the kennels or on dunghills ; where drains are not provided to carry off any large body of stagnating or corrupted water in the neighbourhood ; where flesh meats make the greater part of the diet, without a proper

mixture of bread, greens, wine or other fermented liquors ; where the grain is old and mouldy, or has been damaged by a wet season ; or where the fibres are relaxed by immoderate warm bathing. I say, in proportion to the number of these or the like causes concurring, a city will be more or less subject to pestilential diseases : or to receive the leaven of a true plague, when brought into it by any merchandize.” Many will scarcely believe, that, in the year 1838, more than seventy years after the foregoing had been written, it was necessary to represent to parliament, in a special report, the deadly prevalence of fever in the metropolis of Great Britain, traceable to one or more of the following causes :

“ 1. Houses and courts or alleys without privies, without covered drains, and with only open surface gutters, so ill made that the fluid in many places was stagnant.

“ 2. Large open ditches, containing stagnant liquid filth.

“ 3. Houses dirty beyond description, as if never washed or swept ; and extremely crowded with inhabitants, who had no means of separation in case of disease arising among them.

“ 4. Pigs kept in back yards, with sties very filthy, and masses of half putrid food for the pigs in receptacles around, which, in one instance, were in the back room of the house, with an open door to the front room, in which was lying a man in the last stage of fever.

“ 5. Heaps of refuse and rubbish, vegetable and animal remains, at the bottom of close courts and in corners.”

[*See Report of the Poor Law Commissioners relative to certain charges which have been disallowed by the Auditors of Unions in England and Wales.*]

When such is the state of London at the present moment, it may be superfluous to allude to the condition of Irish towns; yet, I cannot pass over, without a word of notice, the disgraceful condition in which many parts of Dublin are permitted to remain, and that too, notwithstanding the exaction, from its impoverished citizens, of a ruinous and most exorbitant impost, entitled, by a singularly infelicitous Hibernicism, “ A tax for paving and cleansing.”

And why is such a state of things allowed to continue? Simply because, in latter days, those who should have assumed the useful and honorable position of leaders of the medical profession, have too often failed to use the opportunities which their success in life has opened to them, of raising their profession and themselves in public estimation, by engaging in the performance of public duties. Simply, because such gentlemen have been fighting with their juniors for the paltry gains of their trade, instead of employing in the service of the community and of their own reputation, and, as a natural consequence, that of their profession, that leisure which their early success would have allowed them to enjoy, and that practical wisdom, medical and worldly, which it was, at least,

within their reach to have acquired. Had the seniors of the medical profession not systematically sunk their character as citizens in that of attendants upon the sick; had the richest and highest of them not too frequently, even to the end of their servile career, continued to be menials; had they not, throughout their whole lives, been, in every instance, deterred by the fear of losing a single guinea, from coming forward, and manfully engaging in public questions which lay within their province, the public and the medical profession would not now labour under many of the grievances to which I have already hastily alluded. We should not now have non-medical poor-law commissioners, endeavouring, by a side wind* to constitute themselves into a permanent sanatory board; we should not have the public health trifled with, by the supply of water to the metropolis being left to the precarious management of private companies; the construction of its sewerage to commissioners unremunerated, in any *direct* way, save by four annual dinners; the opening of its streets for the promotion of health, to boards utterly unacquainted with a single principle upon which the physical well being of the human body depends. Had medical men taken the share which duty required of them in public affairs, I must further say, we should not have the construction of houses and public buildings, the position of slaughter houses and knacking yards, the locality of burial grounds and cemeteries, abandoned to

* Vide Report quoted above *passim*.

the uncontrolled whim of uninformed individuals. I might enumerate other nuisances, dangerous to public health, many of which are daily brought before our courts of justice, to the extreme perplexity of both judge and jury, the questions relating to which it is idle to refer to any save a Politico-Medical tribunal; but it is unnecessary—those I have mentioned must be admitted to be sufficient to prove the argument to which I have confined myself.

There are many other matters, in the management of which *Political Medicine* could, and ought, to have a share. UNWHOLESOME TRADES, for example, should be subjected to some restrictive regulations; and the health of the people should not be surrendered, unprotected and uncared for, as a sacrifice to the unrestrained avarice of capitalists. The only persons competent to construct such regulations are, obviously, *Political Physicians*. It is clearly impossible that any person, unacquainted with medicine, could trace to their proper sources the peculiar diseases which affect plumbers, painters, stone-hewers, needle-grinders, &c.; and it is no less true, that mere knowledge of the causes and nature of those maladies can do little toward providing for their prevention, unless it be combined with an accurate acquaintance with the habits, commercial relations, social condition, and prejudices of those subjected to them. In this matter, therefore, the mere practical physician is of little use; he can, no doubt, treat properly, and perhaps, cure an individual labouring under painter's colic; but unless he possesses political knowledge, such

as I have specified, he can do nothing towards relieving the trades of plumbing and painting, and the masses engaged in them, from the heavy burden of unhealthiness.

The treatment of LUNATICS forms another important item in the catalogue of subjects belonging to *Political Medicine*. The law, in *England*, has been beneficially altered, with regard to this matter, during the last few years ; and the necessity of medical interference has been, to a certain extent, recognised, by the appointment of some able medical men among the metropolitan commissioners in lunacy. Much, however, still remains to be done. In the first place, why has not this law been extended to Ireland ? and why has not the protection of the commission in *England* been given to insane individuals confined in private dwellings, as well as to the inmates of licensed asylums ?

The management also of commissions, *de lunatico inquirendo*, it must be obvious to every one who has thought upon the subject, requires to be considerably modified ; and the improvement of it should be entrusted, not to lawyers, but to *Political Physicians*. The monstrous and absurd decisions which are daily pronounced by juries in those cases show that they are utterly incompetent to be entrusted with the liberty of the individual upon the one hand, or with the interest of the relatives and the security of the public upon the other. It must also be admitted, that the manner in which they are but too often perplexed by the evidence of medical men, and the fre-

quent contradictions between these, furnish reasonable excuses for many of their delays and errors. It is not, however, to be expected that the mere fact of a man having obtained a medical education is, alone, a sufficient qualification for the detection of insanity in individuals, or the management of it when detected. This, as well as every other department of *Political Medicine*, requires special instruction, and a considerable addition of knowledge, to that large stock which is required by the practical physician. If I may, in this instance, venture beyond the line within which I have hitherto confined myself, and suggest an improvement, I would be disposed to say, that the certificate of no private medical man or men should be admitted as proof of insanity; but that public medical officers should be appointed, to districts of the country in which, while they might discharge many other duties, (to which I am not now about to refer) they should also be the only persons authorized to pronounce upon the sanity or insanity of individuals; their decision being in every case made a public record, and themselves held responsible for its correctness. Were such a plan as this adopted, the security to the liberty of the alleged lunatic would, I think, be encreased, by being committed publicly and authoritatively to a competent officer; while the safety of the public would be more certainly and promptly provided for than by the present circuitous method. The necessity for some direct method of dealing with the insane has, indeed, been so strongly pressed upon the attention of the government,

by some late unhappy occurrences, that a special act has, during the last session, passed through parliament, "To make more effectual provision for the prevention of offences by insane persons in Ireland." The remedy provided, however, though well intended, is in the highest degree unconstitutional and absurd; giving to the Lord Lieutenant, and any two *irresponsible* medical men, the power to confine in a lunatic asylum any person who may have been committed for trial for any offence, and who may be alleged to be an idiot or insane; and further, making the certificate of any *apothecary*, that an individual is a dangerous lunatic, sufficient warrant for his committal to jail, from whence he can only be released by a tedious process of law. It appears to me to be the very essence of our constitution, that no interference with personal liberty should be permitted, except at the hands of responsible and recognised authorities; whereas, according to this act (1 Vic. c. 27.) all responsibility is removed from the Lord Lieutenant in the one case, by the certificate of two *irresponsible* medical men; and from the Justice of the Peace, in the other, by the certificate of an apothecary, who can not in any way be held accountable for his opinion.

Were such a public medical officer as I have alluded to in existence, the power of advising the Lord Lieutenant or the Justice might, I think, with safety be entrusted to him, for he would be himself *virtute officii* responsible; and his opinion would, in addition, be a public record. His intervention would also prevent the occurrence of those cases that so frequently

disgrace our system of jurisprudence; in which the greater part of the fortune of an individual may be expended in proving him sane or insane. Even within the last few weeks, a commission of lunacy was reported in *The Times*, as being held upon a person of small property, in which the investigation lasted eleven days, and cost £300 a day. All this expense was incurred to prove a miserable old man of eighty-seven to be insane; and accordingly he was found insane by twelve out of fifteen votes, after being goaded by, what he himself called, the irrelevant questions of counsel, who were permitted to bait him, contrary to the wish of some of the jury; and who, if irritability of temper be a sign of insanity, were far from being as sane as the object of their attacks. In this case a few hours' investigation, by a proper medical officer, would have settled the question at a trifling expense, and, in all probability, would have prevented the perpetration of an act of barbarous cruelty. The existence of such an officer would also prevent the recurrence of those scenes now so commonly enacted in the magistrates' offices in England, when alleged lunatics are brought up for committal, and such investigations as the following occur, and are followed by similar results:—The case in question was that of a young man named *Mundy*, who was charged with insanity, *because he sat up late at night for the purpose of study, and was quite a marked character*. One of the magistrates, Mr. Barlow, did not conceive this to be proof sufficient; and interfered, every now and then, with “ I can really see no symptoms of in-

sanity in this young man." But at this juncture, unluckily for poor *Mundy*, Mr. Barlow's official colleague, Sir John Scott Lillie, came into the room. Mr. Barlow explained the nature of the application, and the progress of the inquiry.

Sir J. S. Lillie.—“ *Well, we have only to sign the order ; ours is quite a ministerial act.* ”

Mr. Barlow.—“ But before doing so, it is necessary we should have evidence of his insanity ; and Mr. Wright (the surgeon) appears unwilling to sign the certificate.”

Sir J. S. Lillie (*to Mundy*).—“ Why do you object to go to Hanwell (the lunatic asylum)—you will be very kindly treated there? *I think it is a great proof of insanity, your not liking to go there !* ”

Mundy.—“ Restraint does not do for me. I wish for my liberty ; and it is my desire to go abroad as a missionary. Should I be liberated, I doubt not the Rev. Mr. Broad, who has visited me weekly in the workhouse, would enable me to go.”

Sir J. S. Lillie.—“ *I think you had better go to Hanwell.* ”

Mundy.—“ Before I am sent there, there ought, in my opinion, to be the opinion of more than one physician that it is necessary, *you have not now even the opinion of one doctor !* ”—[*Spectator*, Feb. 2, 1839.]

It will scarcely be credited, that the necessary certificates were signed in due form, and this unfortunate man, with no more proof of lunacy existing against him than was furnished by the foregoing conversation,

was dragged from an open English court of justice to be incarcerated in a mad-house.

THE PROVISION OF SUITABLE AID IN SICKNESS for the public generally, and especially for the poorer classes of it, is another and most important branch of *Political Medicine*; and one which, in every well ordered community, should be recognised as a main object of civil government. No proverb is more trite than that which proclaims health to be the greatest of earthly blessings; but it is even more, it is essential, as man is constituted, to the existence of any thing like love of virtue and peace in a nation. All experience shows that human beings, when placed in circumstances which render their tenure of life especially precarious, become, almost in a direct ratio with the uncertainty of their existence, profligate, selfish, and reckless of the sufferings of others. It is only by this theory that we can account for the useless atrocities committed by soldiers in stormed cities; for the debauchery so prevalent in unhealthy climates; and for the almost preternatural barbarities perpetrated by pirates and brigands. The same principle shows itself even in the temporary excitement which so often makes a bloody mutiny the accompaniment of a hopeless shipwreck. Throughout life we hang upon each other—our passions and our affections are the wheels of the great social machine, of whose operations a true self-love, or, to call it by a less offensive name, the instinct of self-preservation, is at once the main-spring and the balance. Let this be disordered or removed by des-

pair, and the other movements run on to certain and hopeless destruction. Looking at the matter in this light, it would be curious to examine, had we data for doing so, how far the healthiness or unhealthiness of a country is co-existent with the enjoyment, among its inhabitants, of free institutions. The comparison can scarcely be made, as history does not furnish us with the necessary elements; but I have little doubt, that health and freedom do usually exist in a direct ratio with each other.

It would be out of place, just now, to pursue these reflections further; my present object being less to theorise, than to point out the practical applications of *Political Medicine*. Unhappily, any illustration of the present subject, derivable from the institutions of Great Britain, must be included in a category of negations; thus, except in the instance of the county infirmaries of Ireland, and of sick prisoners in the public jails, the government in no way interferes with the providing of medical aid for the people. They may have it or not if they please, and how they please—it is a matter with which neither whig nor tory concerns himself, further than to take advantage of human weakness, and of the ignorance which both parties have encouraged, for the purpose of wringing from the sufferings of the diseased a few paltry pounds of revenue, by the tax upon patent medicines and stamp upon diplomas. This, in a word, is the amount of government interference in this important matter. Sixteen or seventeen institutions for granting medical qualifications do, indeed, exist in the empire; but what is their use?

Such of them as are honest, and inclined to perform that duty toward the public, which the legislature has neglected, serve but as trammels upon those who place themselves under their regulations. Such individuals, indeed, by their own voluntary act, render themselves liable to punishment for infringement of regulations having for their object the benefit of the human race—*they* cannot advertise the possession of secret remedies, nor publicly traffic in human misery; but in restraining themselves from those sources of profit, they but make way for rival practitioners, encouraged and abetted by the government. In return for the labour and expense of a prolonged education, they receive no protection whatsoever; they have not even a legal scale of charges, which they can enforce upon those who employ and are unwilling to remunerate them. If they are required for the public service, the hardest possible bargain is driven with them, and their exertions often obtained for nothing, (as under the new English poor law,) by a skilful use of the threat of employing their uneducated rivals.

The existence of medical charities throughout the empire cannot be urged in disproof of these statements; in England, such institutions are altogether the offspring of private benevolence; and, in Ireland, though they occasionally receive a sort of parsimonious and conditional assistance from the state, still they are, in their origin and maintenance, essentially private. The government has not, *even in these instances*, stepped in to protect the health of the poor and the pockets of the humane, by establishing a qualifi-

cation, (always excepting the case of the Irish infirmaries,) for the medical attendants of the charities in question; nor such a general supervision as is necessary to ensure their honest and effectual working. What has been the reason of all this? Why has the government neglected the health of the people, and the welfare of a profession so necessary to existence? We must reply, as we did before, because, with too many of the senior members of that profession, the baser passion of avarice has conquered, in latter days, the nobler motives which lead men to engage in the public service of their country; because, in a nation like this, where the beginning and ending of rank and consideration is, and can be found, only in politics, even those who have made fortunes by medicine, fear to exercise the common right of citizenship by voting at an election, lest, by doing so, they should displease one patient, or lose one solitary guinea. Not that they are devoid of ambition, or even of party prejudices. No! the latter they too often exhibit abundantly; not, however, in the form of professional *esprit de corps*, but in private whisperings, directed to the attainment of personal and family jobs; while the traces of a bastard species of the former may occasionally be discovered, in the eagerness with which some pitiful distinction is pursued, or the favour of the great courted. Let us hope that better things are in store; and that medical men may see the necessity of applying their own faculties to the working out of the respectability and security of their profession; by doing so they will certainly discharge,

in the most effectual way, their duty to themselves and to the community.

The subjects of COLONIZATION and EMIGRATION will also be found to include various considerations which fairly bring them within the reach of *Political Medicine*. The sufferings, for example, which are too frequently experienced in emigrant ships and in new settlements, are often occasioned by the want of arrangements such as can only be understood and provided for by men acquainted with medicine, both practically and politically. It is only by such persons that the quantity of space required for each passenger; the quantity and quality of provisions, medicines, &c. necessary for each voyage; the kind of clothing and stores which emigrants should possess, can be even guessed at; and it is from a want of attention to these particulars that we must ascribe the many melancholy catastrophes which yearly occur to the lower classes of those adventurers. Again, in the choice of sites for new settlements, the utility of the intervention of *Political Medicine* must be obvious. I do not mean to say that medical men are, at present, in possession of sufficient accurate knowledge of the local causes of healthiness or unhealthiness, to enable them to advise with infallibility as to the expediency or inexpediency of any particular locality; but I do mean to maintain, that the only persons who can form even a reasonable conjecture on the subject, are individuals practically acquainted with the art of healing and understanding its history in various periods and countries, and having, in addi-

tion to such knowledge, minds so enlarged by general intercourse with the world, as to be capable of taking into account, not merely the physical characters of a proposed settlement, but the physical, political, and moral condition, and the social and personal habits of the settlers. Did time permit me to go into any lengthened proof of the dangerous character of the errors traceable to a want of such guidance as this, in the conduct of projects of emigration, I should only have to refer to the records of almost every colony, both foreign and British. Perhaps, however, I cannot better support my view than by a reference to the "Statistical report on the sickness, mortality, and invaliding among the troops in the West Indies, prepared from the records of the army medical department, and lately presented to parliament by Her Majesty." A glance over this highly interesting document will be sufficient to show a most extraordinary variation in the character, as to healthiness, of the different colonies. Let us take from it at random, the table exhibiting the annual ratio of mortality, per 1000 of white troops serving at each of the colonies in the windward and leeward command; we find it to average from 40.6 in Antigua to 152.8 in Tobago. That this difference depends upon some local agency, is shown by the fact of its being also observable among the black troops, though in a minor degree; in each 1000 of them the average annual mortality was, in Antigua (one of the lowest) 30. and in Tobago (again the highest) 47. The locality of the prejudicial agency is further proved by the fact, that

the chief mortality is occasioned by different diseases in each of the colonies. Thus, Tobago is most remarkable for fever; Dominica, for diseases of the bowels and of the brain; Barbadoes, for those of the lungs; Grenada, for those of the liver; while Trinidad is most noted for its dropsies. These facts alone sufficiently prove the important agency of local causes in the production of disease; but when we turn to the deductions drawn by Captain Tulloch from the report in question, we find startling evidence of the neglect of investigation which has hitherto prevailed, and of the meagre state of our knowledge upon points long since settled in the imaginations of men. Thus the facts adduced clearly go to prove, that the diseases incident to those latitudes, owe their origin neither to elevated temperature; excess of moisture; want of ventilation, in consequence of the periodical absence of the trade winds; the influence of miasma, from the South American continent; any peculiar physical or geological characters of the soil; the influence of marshes; the excessive or rank vegetation; nor even, within certain limits, to the want of elevation above the level of the sea. Yet all these causes have been long supposed, either singly or collectively, to be sufficient to account for the sickliness of the West Indies.

This complete upsetting of received theories may appear to some to be an argument against the importance of *Political Medicine*, in this particular department. Of what use, it may be said, are your theories in the guidance of our colonists, if your know-

ledge is so limited as Captain Tulloch has shown it to be ? I answer, the matter has never yet been properly investigated; the very first important step having been taken, in the construction of the report referred to, (many important circumstances have not hitherto been even thought of, as for instance, the electrical condition of the atmosphere,) but let such inquirers as Mr. Marshall and Captain Tulloch continue their labours, and we have no doubt, to use the words of the latter, that " Fresh sources of information, on this interesting and important subject, may open up, and enable us to appreciate with more accuracy the agencies by which so much sickness and mortality have been occasioned." Now, it is to the *Political Physician* an open field of inquiry ; hereafter it will, in all probability, become one for useful practical operation.

I have now glanced at a few of the practical subjects in which *Political Medicine* may be advantageously employed ; there are many others at which I have not even hinted, as for instance, the whole of those included within the department of medical jurisprudence, both ministerial and judicial, to which it is not my present intention to refer. All those to which I have alluded, it will be observed, are marked by an administrative character ; and it is with strict reference to that circumstance that I ventured to bring them into my argument. *Political Medicine*, however, is suited to higher uses, and well would it have been for the community, in this as well as in other respects, had the fatal mistake not been committed of

attributing the character of *learned* (in a parliamentary sense) merely to those possessed of legal knowledge. It requires but a slight and hasty examination of the history of our institutions, to convince all who are susceptible of conviction, of the vast amount of human misery which would have been spared to this empire, had the legislature been held to be "*indoctum*," and therefore incomplete, not merely from the absence of those learned in the law, but from the more important want of members possessing Politico-Medical information. Had such been the case, we should scarcely have had the sanction of law given to a wholesale murder of foundlings, such as was practised in this city under the the old hospital system; or to their slaughter in detail, as it is now more quietly carried on, under the present parochial plan. We should not have had the time of parliament and the money of the nation squandered, in amassing volumes of evidence to prove that the privation of light, air, and sleep (in factory employment) was injurious to the health of tender children. We should not have had men of benevolent hearts and excellent intentions, deliberately instituting those hot-beds of scrofula, charter schools, and thereby providing the means of narrowing the hearts, crippling the bodies, and debasing the minds of a rising generation. Nay, had even a small portion of knowledge of *Political Medicine* been present in the national councils, we should not now have to dread the working out of that recent and most unhappy blunder—the Irish poor law. We should not have a measure, no doubt intended well,

and if well devised, capable of effecting immeasurable good, defaced by the quackery of men possessed of but one idea, (that of the work-house test,) and inconceivably ignorant of the moral and physical constitution of the people for whose necessities they undertook to provide. The work-house test! and for a people sunk into a condition as near to actual starvation as it is possible for human creatures to endure. But the ingenuity of the idea must not be allowed to pass without full notice. Of all the blessings which a bountiful Providence has bestowed upon his creatures, these unhappy people can scarcely be said to enjoy more than one—the free access of pure, unvitiated air; half fed, miserably clad, and still more wretchedly housed, it is to this alone that they are indebted for the amount of health which they possess; yet, the deprivation of this solitary blessing is to be made the test of their destitution; of their worthiness of relief at the hands of the community. What must be the consequence if (which I scarcely think can be the case) the present absurd scheme be persisted in? As certainly as these people, unused as they are to animal food, and destitute of stamina, as they must consequently be, as certainly as they are collected, young and old, aged and infirm, into large masses, and deprived of a free ventilation, so surely will the “able bodied” constitute centres of the most pestilential maladies—so surely will the young become victims to that dreadful scourge of the human race, scrofula, with all its lamentable results.

But it may be said, that in supposing a want of ven-

tilation in the work-houses I am begging the question, and that it is not to be imagined but that the commissioners will do the best that can be done in this respect. The best that can be done for ventilation, in a house containing 600 persons, most of them sick, infirm, or of tender age, is, in my opinion, very trifling; but, judging from the past, I do not see that we have reason to expect even this. Let any man who desires to know the grounds of this opinion, only look at the plans for work-houses, sanctioned by the commissioners, and published in their reports, and then judge for himself. One of these documents, the work of Sir Francis Bond Head, is a positive curiosity in its way, and, we hope at least, has been preserved less on account of the intrinsic value set upon it by the board, than as an interesting monument of that gentleman's services as an assistant commissioner. The peculiar merit of Sir Francis Bond Head's design is, according to his own account, that in height, thickness of wall, and substantiality of building, its rooms shall present no attractive luxury to the pauper. Accordingly, it contains fifty-six dormitories, *each to accommodate at least nine persons, with walls one brick in thickness, and with no provision for thorough air.* This latter defect is, however, compensated for by the extraordinary size of these cells, which are to be, (and Sir Francis Bond Head apologises for the extravagance,) *fifteen feet in length by ten in breadth, and seven in height, to hold nine persons!* It is unnecessary to go further. We are told in the report,

that such a work-house for 500 paupers has been contracted for in Kent, for £4300 ; and as the assistant commissioners have recently stated, that they intend to buy land, build houses, and provide accommodation for 600 of the destitute Irish poor, for £7000 ; we may fairly presume that they will be made equally as comfortable as the unfortunate men of Kent.

But it is time for me to draw toward a conclusion ; else what was intended for a slight and hasty sketch, may increase in bulk so as far to outgrow its usefulness. My object, from the commencement, has been, not to convey novel or systematic information upon the important subjects to which I have referred, but rather to block out such a rough outline of *Political Medicine* as may, perhaps, induce those whose interest, duty, and desire it must be to promote the common weal, to take into their consideration the propriety of encouraging it as a pursuit. Should I succeed in doing this, or should I even attain the length of kindling a wholesome ambition in the breasts of those members of the medical profession, whom fortune, or their own industry, has blessed with means of enjoying an honorable leisure, I have little doubt, that no long time will elapse until my views shall be acted upon, and a literal and physical interpretation will supersede the figurative and moral one which has hitherto been applied to the maxim, SALUS POPULI SUPREMA LEX.

THE END.

