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THE
BONE-GNAWING SYSTEM:

ADDRESSED TO

MICHAEL HUNTER, ESQ.,

THE DEPUTY-CHAIRMAN OF THE SHEFFIELD
BOARD OF GUARDIANS.

JOB SAID—

“ When the ear heard *me*, then it blessed me ; and when the eye saw *me*, it gave witness to me : Because I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and *him that had* none to help him. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me : and I caused the widow’s heart to sing for joy. I put on righteousness, and it clothed me : my judgment *was* a robe and a diadem. I was eyes to the blind, and feet *was* I to the lame. I *was* a father to the poor : and the cause *which* I knew not I searched out. And I brake the jaws of the wicked, and plucked the spoil out of his teeth.”

JOB XXIX, 11—17.

BY SAMUEL ROBERTS,

THE PAUPERS’ ADVOCATE.

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THE
BONE-GNAWING SYSTEM, &c.

“That country which swarms with rogues in rags and rogues in ruffles, in which Lords and Lacquies are alike corrupt,—in which nothing is cared for but money, and nothing contemptible but poverty, can neither be free, nor deserving of freedom.—LACON.

TO MICHAEL HUNTER, ESQ.

SIR,—You well know that in my many publications on the subject of the *New Poor Law*, I have, during many years, designated myself the “*PAUPERS’ ADVOCATE*.” You must be aware too, that ever since the first promulgation of that most horrible of all inhuman Laws, I have, by almost every exertion in my power, and at the expense of hundreds of pounds, exposed its vileness, and opposed its continuance. My having done this—from a full conviction of its being my duty so to do—will, I hope, serve to excuse my having presumed to adopt a designation which, if deserved, I should consider as one of the highest, if not the very highest, and most honourable, that man can acquire and retain.

I apprehend—from what I have known of your family and connections—that you do not acknowledge the divinity of Jesus Christ; nevertheless, I conceive that you profess to believe that He was more than man, and that all which He did and said were, in accordance to the will of God—to be believed and practiced by all professing Christians. You cannot, then, deny that almost the whole of the moral precepts of Jesus Christ are direct or indirect inculcations of pity of, and relief to, the *poor*,—particularly to the aged, the fatherless children, and the widows. So far does He carry this injunction, as to assert, that to be *wholly* His disciples, we must sell all that we have, and give the product to the poor. He is not even strict in requiring that those relieved should previously have been holy; but if not, He tells them to “Go and sin no more.” Such were His precepts, while His practice was in conformity therewith; for we are assured that He was continually employed in *doing* good—principally to the poor—particular instances of which are innumerable. He goes farther than this,—He denounces God’s displeasure against all the oppressors of the poor, however great or dignified: “Woe unto ye Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, who devour widow’s houses, and for a pretence make long prayers; therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation!” But even this is not *all*, for He declares, in terms too strong and clear to be misunderstood, that eternal life, or eternal misery, shall result from the compassion or oppression shown to, or exercised on, the poor. He affirms that those who see the hungry, and do not feed them; the naked, and do not clothe them; the prisoners, and do not administer to their comfort,—shall inevitably be cast into hell! This you cannot dispute.

What then would Jesus Christ have said, had there been, in those days, any human beings voluntarily taking upon themselves the office of *Public GUARDIANS of the Poor*; who, instead of feeding,

clothing, and comforting them, appeared to *take delight* in adding every way to their sufferings? This is a species of inhumanity unknown in those days, and yet it is now practiced in this Christian country, (sanctioned—nay, commanded—by the Legislature—throughout the whole land,) thus setting God and Christ, with all their promises and threatenings, at open defiance. This is not at a time when the country itself is impoverished; but when it so abounds with riches, that nothing less, it seems, than universal gambling, and almost universal licentiousness, among the higher and middle ranks, can find employment for their abundance. Now, Sir, horrible as this is, can you deny one word of it? I have repeated the same truths over and over, and you well know that they are true! You cannot have known what you have of the proceedings at both the Sheffield and Ecclesall Unions, without knowing what has been the conduct of the majority of all persons connected with the management of those Dens of Thieves,—those licensed Brothels, in which the impious rich torture the godly children of poverty, under beings calling themselves *Guardians of the Poor*. Can anything, I ask, that has occurred at Andover, equal, in atrocity, the following relation of occurrences, extracted from

THE CASE OF
WM. WHITAKER, THE PAUPER LUNATIC.

“The following case of premature death, arising from neglect and inhumanity in the Sheffield Union Workhouse, is here stated, as I had it from the widow of the victim herself, who appears to be a highly respectable and intelligent woman. Her husband was forty-five years of age, a brush maker by trade, steady and industrious.

“They had been married I think fifteen years, and had three children. From the difficulties of the times, and from other circumstances, he at length had become so far insane, as to make him troublesome, but not so as to cause him to be dangerous. Being compelled to become chargeable to the Parish, he was at length (*unknown to his wife,*) taken to the Workhouse. When she went there on the next day to enquire about him, and to see him, she found that he was so fastened in a crib, on straw, as scarcely to be able to move at all, and that he had got a very black eye. She was told that on his being determined not to stay in the Workhouse, but to go home, he, on being prevented, had become outrageous, and had given *himself* the black eye, which had caused them to fasten him down. He begged hard to go home with his wife, and she begged hard to have him, but they were refused, though on her applying to one of the Guardians, Mr. Spencer, he joined his entreaties to her’s.

“*There were then nearly twenty poor Lunatics and Idiots in the house, without there being either proper places, proper nurses, or proper medical men for them.* When the poor man was taken from home, he was in good health, without sores of any kind, and with a good appetite. Any one may conceive that such a man, so fastened down, in such a place, with such company, would be continually agitated to get loose, and, if not deranged at all, must soon have become mad beyond cure. He was kept in that state of dreadful excitement *during three weeks,*—almost without food, his keeper asserting that he *would not* take any, though, when his wife took him anything, he not only ate it readily, but picked up even the very crumbs. He soon, of course, became unwell, and had deep and large sores formed on his back from continued lying on it, and from constant restlessness.

“On his wife’s calling to see him about the twentieth day, she found him in so dreadful a state, that she felt assured he could not live long; she told

the keepers and some of the Guardians so, and begged that then, at any rate, she might bring his children for him to see, as they had never been allowed to come at all. She was, however, unfeelingly refused even this request. On going again the second day after, to see him and enquiring how he did, the answer was—"Why! have'nt you heard? HE'S DEAD!" "THEN HE'S MURDERED!" was her feeling, natural, and, I think, proper exclamation.

"Horrible, however, as is this instance of what I call savage barbarity, (taken in all its bearings, I think the most horrible of all that I ever heard of,) it is only one instance, among innumerable others, inflicted (in defiance of their own law) by the then Officers, paid and unpaid—of our Sheffield Union. With that flagrant instance of premature death on their conscience—they proceeded (setting the remonstrance of the Master Cutler and Rate-payers at defiance,) at a time when the Rates were so high, that they could not be collected—to expend about ten thousand pounds of the public money, in making *new erections*, though those which they already had, were very far larger, with proper arrangements, than could ever be wanted. Of this sum, £1,500 was appropriated to the erection of a *Mad House* capable of containing more than fifty patients, and that at a time when the Masters of the Guardians had just informed them that they had no right to retain any insane patients in the Workhouse. In order to effect this mad scheme, the upstart tyrants, without authority, and in violation of even their own law—packed off—I believe in the night—as they might have done so many scabbed sheep) all the poor Lunatics and Idiots at *Attercliffe*, to the most horrible, murderous den, that ever such poor, pitiable human beings were imprisoned in. Much of the soul-harrowing proceedings perpetrated in that PLACE OF TORMENT, have already been told—much more of them will, in all probability, be soon divulged, but there will much remain untold, which no man in this world will ever hear of. By the spirited exertions of one humane Overseer, the three *Inquisitors General* were, however, compelled to send down one of their *Honourable Familiars*, professedly to investigate proceedings—but, as might be expected from one implicated in the crime—his object throughout, appeared to be to throw obstacles in the way of eliciting the truth, to praise the Guardians—to encourage them in squandering the public money, and in getting away as soon as he could.* The proceedings, however, served to break up the *Attercliffe Place of Torment*, to cause many of the patients to be sent to the Wakefield Asylum, and to cause much more attention to be paid to those remaining in the Workhouse.

"Let all these *Unjust Stewards* recollect too, (as they must have been told the fact) that there is a *worm* that never dieth, and a *fire* that can never be quenched, prepared—if the Bible is to be believed—to be endured by those who pervert Justice and shew no mercy. Let them recollect too, that the Gates of *Heaven* (where *poverty* is not deemed a *crime*) are not closed even against those whom Malthusian Guardians assert, ought, when sent by God into this world, to have been immediately sent back to him. To these, however, (yea even to poor Whitaker,)—may some of their oppressors and destroyers have to beg, in vain, for a drop of cold water to cool their tongues.

At present, however, I am happy to say that I believe the majority of the Guardians at Sheffield are, from care in appointing them, of a different description; while it is by all stated that You are the *great*—almost the *sole*—obstacle to the now shewing of that mercy to the crimeless poor there, which otherwise would be done. I do not assert this on the continual—almost general—complaints which reach me of the suffering poor only, but from also the almost equally preva-

* This is as they all do, at Andover and everywhere. Is this a cursed Law, or is it not?

How many Lunatics are there now in the House, and how long have they been in?

lent complaints of some of the disgusted Guardians themselves;—nay, even on that of the *moon-dropped* GOVERNOR, whose too great indulgence to the poor has never *here* been complained of. I should really like to know who this said Mr. Rodgers is! When I entrust a large sum of my own money, and much of that of my children, to any one, prudence suggests that it would be right to know something of the man so trusted. I have enquired if he had given his security, and was told that he *had*. Who, and what was it? That my informer could not tell—though all depends upon that, and my informer was a Guardian. Whether Mr. R. dropped from the moon or not, I cannot say; but on earth he seems to be a complete *ignis fatuus*, skipping in the dark from Union to Union—all being delighted with him, yet all equally delighted, (after having had him only a very short time,) to get him removed, to enlighten the Guardians of some other benighted bone-gnawing Golgotha. As to obtaining testimonials, MR. CROSLAND is a novice to him—only the former did get some money along with the names of his eulogizers, which it does not appear that the latter has yet obtained. Surely never man was so bepraised, in order to find him *another* place, after trials of only from six to twelve months. I should fancy that his Testimonializers are much of the same stamp with those of our *Sheffield* and *Andover* ones. I have already laid Mr. Rodgers's Staines' Testimonial before the public. I thought that that was pretty strong after a trial of only *twelve months*; but that is as nothing compared with one which he has lately "*handed over*" to me from the great men of "*Chard*," in Gloucestershire, where it seems, three years after leaving Staines, in Middlesex, he was Governor for SIX MONTHS, when they too, gave him his butter cake, which I have got. It is signed by thirty Guardians of the Poor, of a place in which, as far as appears, he was six months before, unknown. In one of the letters, however, it is said that he left in consequence of quarrelling with the Guardians. But this is by no means all. The pamphlet contains no less than *twenty six Letters*, from Guardians in the counties of Somerset, Dorset, and Devon,—into all which Chard Union extends, all speaking in the very highest terms of both Mr. and Mrs. Rodgers, who had only been six months in the place, during which short period, I conceive it was utterly impossible that any of them could *know* what they assert of him. From how many other Unions he may have Testimonials, I cannot tell, only it appears that he has likewise been Governor of *Redruth* Union, in Cornwall. It appears, too, that he either was for a short time—or attempted to be—Guardian for *Liverpool* Union, in Lancashire. Other letters speak highly of him as Governor of *Stow* Union, in Gloucestershire, in which he remained *nine months*. He is now Governor of the *Sheffield* Union, in Yorkshire, in which situation he has now been upwards of a year, with a salary of £150. Really, Mr. and Mrs. Rodgers must be admitted—whether from the moon or elsewhere—to be an extraordinary couple! In the space of *four years* they have *Governed* in no less, it appears, than *eight different Counties*, in places hundreds of miles apart; perhaps in more, leaving all in a very short time, with Testimonials such as I should think nothing less than a twenty years' faithful service could entitle any one to. Many of his recommenders are Clergymen. But really, after knowing the conduct of the Guardians of the *Sheffield*, the *Ecclesall*, and the *Andover* Unions, there is no

being astonished at anything. He must be a *good man* indeed, who could not obtain Testimonials, if he wanted them. I should very much like, however, to see a full and true relation of the birth, life, and adventures of Samuel Rodgers, Esq. Is Mr. Rodgers—like Mr. Price, who has been sent by the Commissioners to Andover—one of their ready-trained *Governors*, kept by them to be sent to replace any rascally one, who has been convicted and discarded? Truly, the *Unions* and *Railways* seem to be stirring all the mud and slime from the bottom, and raising it to the top!

What the opinion of your Reverend Chairman, the *Adulterer's Advocate*, on the subject may be, I have not heard. (I wonder if he be acquainted with his Reverend Brother of Andover!) Standing as you voluntarily do, in a *Public Situation*, (a servant of *mine*, as being a considerable Ratepayer,) I conceive that I have a right, and I embrace it, manfully to expose and censure that conduct in you, which is not only offensive to God—destructive to the poor—and insulting to me, but also highly injurious to the Ratepayers in general. To you, personally, I can bear no malice—I do not even know you—but I shall show before I have done, that of your family and connections, I have long known much. I have then—as “*The Pauper's Advocate*”—an imperious duty to perform, and I shall not shrink from doing it: if I did, I should be like one of those *Priests* and *Levites*, who, on beholding distress, pass it by, disregarding it. A tribe in these days, alas! much too common.

I knew your grandfather; and your father was an inmate of the same house, and often of the same bed with me, during a great part of seven years,—he being apprentice with my father,—and about four years my senior. I should not have recurred to him, but for the purpose of shewing that the oppression and cruelty which *you* are unnecessarily, and, seemingly, wantonly exercising on the poor, are more inexcusable in *you* than they would have been in most others. In many respects, you appear to be a true “*Chip of the Old Block*,”—rude, quarrelsome, and overbearing,—frequently in broils. But I do not think that your father wanted talents, or took that delight in oppressing the poor that you seem to do—though he cared but little for any one but himself. He married while young, a most amiable lady, still younger than himself.—Her name, the tongue of slander never dared to utter! He, however, soon contrived to ruin himself and a respectable partner in business; and when he married a second wife, (your mother,) he was in reality—a *Pauper*,—being, in part at least, maintained by a most truly Reverend Christian Minister,—a REAL GUARDIAN of the POOR; to whose care, when an orphan about ten years old, your father was entrusted. The good man, to whose care he was left, was, however, very unfit for the charge of a youth like him.

You then, Sir, I think, may be considered as having, in some degree, felt the *wants* of poverty. Of your father, after his second marriage, I know but little. A greater contrast than there was between him and his meek and truly Christian Guardian, (I may say adopting, affectionate father,) cannot well be imagined. Since commencing the writing of this address, I have been led to think what an interesting and instructive little work, the life of your father, and his adopting parent, (who was a most singular, as well as excellent character, though a violent Whig, and a zealous Presbyterian,) together with some of their connections, would make!

But to return to you, and to your case and conduct, which seems now to involve the interests of so many parties, even to the affecting the lives and death of hundreds of beings, better and more precious, I conceive, in the sight of God, than yourself.

This overbearing disposition of yours, appears to be carried by you (as far as I have learned) into every concern with which you are connected; while you seem to be forcing yourself into many, without occasion. Your name (as being contentious) is continually occurring in the public prints, both with your workmen, and with your coadjutors in different public bodies. I mention these things only to show that general disposition in you, to tyrannize, which we often see exercised, the strongest by those of the lowest origin. Had you not forced yourself into the so-called office of "*Guardian of the Poor*," and even into that of *Deputy-Chairman*, I should, in all probability, have left to others the loathsome task of correcting you. But by your proceeding to the exercise of that propensity of tyrannizing, in wantonly oppressing those most pitiable of all human beings—sane and insane, old and young, male or female—the pauper poor, you appear to be desirous of luxuriating in inflicting misery on those, the most miserable and most pitiable of your fellow-creatures, (whose cause I have espoused,) over whom a diabolical Law has enabled you to obtain almost despotic power. Here, then, Sir, you come forwards as my *opponent*.—As such, I fear you not, but dauntlessly withstand you, armed as I feel that I am, with—*Truth* and the whole *Word of God*.

In thus needlessly oppressing and destroying the crimeless poor, (opposed even to your coadjutors) you can only be actuated by a most malignant spirit, leading you to delight in inflicting misery; for I do not believe that you are—as a *Guardian*—seeking, like many of your predecessors, to enrich yourself by illegal profits. Your very *language* and behaviour, however, to the poor, and to *others*, proves a want of proper feeling and even of common civility. A few weeks ago, when Mr. Wardle, the Master of the Boys' Charity School, waited upon you at your warehouse, from the Trustees, to state to you the true case of a poor woman, whose allowance you had (opposed to the other *Guardians*) taken from her, your behaviour to him, and your treatment of him, were even *brutal*,—accusing him of coming with a lie in his mouth; yet the case as was stated, proved to be correct, and the allowance restored. I have since then heard of your withdrawing the pay from a very deserving *old man*, who had seen better days, because a few of the first Rate-payers in the town allowed him 6d. each.—Thus, as far as you could, representing *private charity*.—(But for private charity, what could *you* have been?) You would not even suffer the memorial, which the gentlemen sent, to be *answered*!

I thank God that I cannot conceive the feelings of a man, surrounded by hundreds of crimeless fellow creatures, of whose welfare he has taken the charge, but whose misery he is increasing all that he dare to do, while the curses of all around him are upon him. Such feelings cannot be anything better than those of demons. Something approaching to this, is the relation in the public prints of our (alas!) *Un-Englised Queen*, forsaking her people and her country, and at Gotha, sitting for two hours, in a *Chair of State*, while her submissive Husband was, for her amusement, deliberately putting to death, one by one, the greater part of a hundred penned-up beautiful innocent deer, whose throats were afterwards cut, and their carcasses (drenched in their blood,) laid in two rows, for Her Majesty to walk

between, to the sound of sweet music, playing, perhaps,—“*God save the Queen.*” Such is the vileness of human nature, when unrestrained by Christianity, whether in the highest or lowest classes. *You* have, however, the advantage of the Queen,—she was only enjoying, for once, the dying agonies of a few score of irrational creatures, whose sufferings were short; while *You*—seated in *your Chair of State*, are week after week, enjoying the luxury of (yourself)—increasing the lengthened sufferings of hundreds of your immortal fellow creatures, both in and out of the House, many of them, I have no doubt, in almost every respect far your superiors. The treatment of those whom you call *able bodied men*,—men half starved, and working themselves to death, employed in lieu of steam engines, in grinding corn with more severe labour than is conferred on condemned felons at the treadmill, is surely horrible enough. But this, their labour, *you* have sought to increase; not satisfied, as it seems, even by the profits of three or four hundred a year, arising from serving the poor with bread of short weight, and given to them instead of money. Is not this *robbery*, and leading to *bone gnawing*? I should very much wish that *you* could be compelled, for one month, to take the place of one of these living—half-starved—corn-grinding machines, with the same food and accommodations. Though you are much more powerful than what they are, the experiment, I am persuaded, would serve to benefit both you and them. I do not know whether it might drive *you* to the *gnawing of old bones* or not; but I am sure that it would make you eager to obtain a little more of plain food, and I think it would bring you afterwards to feel more pity, and to shew more mercy, to those whom you are now so unfeelingly oppressing.

But, Sir, though *you* may be pleased thus to see your poor fellow creatures oppressed and perishing around you, and may strive to brave the denounced vengeance of your God and of your Saviour;—though *you* may think lightly of the eternal torments of Hell, denounced against the oppressors of the poor! what are all your coadjutors (who profess to believe in God, and regard the poor,) thinking about, to suffer *you* to involve *them* in your crimes and punishments? Surely they *could* stop you in your wicked career! They could! and if they do not, they become as bad—nay, worse—than you. You sin, it seems, from nature;—they, against nature. Why do not they send you to Coventry? At any rate, they can surely—if they please—*out vote you!*

Why have not we a register of births and deaths published quarterly in the Union Workhouses, with the causes and results? I do hope that my friend, Mr Hawksworth (the friend of the poor, ay, and the friend of you, too,) will, with others, exert his utmost powers while in office, to obtain the forming of a permanent *Anti-New Poor Law Committee* of respectable Ratepayers, to visit, by twos or threes occasionally, unexpectedly, the Union Workhouse, and to meet together quarterly, to make and publish Reports. This would prevent an enormous mass of sufferings, rascality, and unnecessary expenditure, till the diabolical Act is abolished, and the blessed good Old Poor Law restored.

There are now, I understand, a third fewer *in*-paupers than what have been. Two-thirds of the House is now, or may be, unoccupied. Two-thirds of the paupers who are *in*, would be better *out*: yet we are paying (as when the House was gloriously full,) more than two thousand pounds a year in *salaries*, when five hundred would fully

suffice. Two-thirds at least of the buildings might be let either for CHURCHES, or again for COTTON MILLS, dropping entirely the *living* corn grinding machinery. There is, however, but one effectual remedy:—Renounce at once the accursed Law with the devil and all his works, and all his rascally agents down from Dukes, Lords, and Bishops,* even to *Sheffield Cutlers*, who are (under the sanction of this diabolical Law,) not only *crucifying the Son of God afresh*, but are compelling *Him*, by hunger, to be a *gnawer of old dry bones*; for He, who cannot lie, hath said—“Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my *brethren*, ye have done it unto *Me*,”—therefore “depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels,”(agents.) Now, Sir, you know that this was said by Jesus Christ, the Judge of quick and dead, and *you* know—at any rate, *I* know—that you, and all those, whether Clergy or Laity, who do not come forward to prevent such oppression of the poor, will (without repentance) subject themselves to the denounced vengeance.

The foregoing are the grounds on which I have, from the first, declared that the accursed Law—throughout opposed to the Law of God—would be the ruin of the country—giving riches to villains, and oppressing the honest and deserving poor, till God should arise terribly to take vengeance on the wickedness of the nation. Every year has served more and more to confirm me in this opinion.† You have seen what villany the Investigation at Ecclesall, Sheffield, and Andover, have brought to light; and there is little doubt but that similar investigations would produce similar results—more or less—in almost every Union in the kingdom. As I esteem myself a servant of God—bound to obey and defend all His Laws, and the enforcers of the New Poor Law as the agents of Satan and the worshippers of mammon—I shall not remain quiescent when I believe that I see men like you—servants of the public—frustrating all that they can, my efforts to obey God and to afford protection to the poor, from your oppression: No! I am not, however, your enemy (but your friend) because I tell you the *Truth*.

I do not assert that the paupers at all Union Workhouses gnaw putrid horse bones, and devour raw potatoes, for many cannot get them at all: but I do say, that the intention and the spirit of the Act is, and was, so to lower the *quality* and the *quantity* of their food, as to make them hungry enough to eat *anything*. The utmost of food allowed is not to exceed 21oz. per day, even for able bodied men. Felons are allowed more than 30oz.; and young children in Charity schools often have more than 40oz. The pauper oppressors can, however, *reduce* their quantity as *low* as they please: they have, therefore, the *power*, and in some instances (it seems) the *will*, to

* It is a horrible fact that the diabolical Act, which robs the Poor of their Rights, and dooms millions of them to destruction, had two BISHOPS (of London and Chester,) for its concoctors; and perhaps the greatest number of Chairmen of Board of Guardians, are Clergymen.

† The respectable honest poor of no kingdom on earth, are so enslaved and savagely treated as are now the English paupers; they are imprisoned and punished as severely for *begging*, as for *stealing*; and for *poverty* only, are fed worse than *felons*: they are put out of the Constitutional Laws, and are delivered, bound hand and foot, into the power of despotic tyrants. They are torn from their parents, their children, their wives, and their God. They can be punished without trial, famished, and when dead, given to the Surgeons,

inflict even death with impunity. So much for *quantity!* As relates to *quality*, the declared object of the Malthusian Bill, was to feed the poor on "*coarser food;*" the particular kinds was not stated. Horse beans and sawdust were guessed at; but *putrid bones of horses* and raw potatoes, were not then thought of. This has been a late happy, unlooked for discovery. Probably, *human bones*, may be the next, if the Surgeons do not scrape them too clean.

With the exception of that of Sheffield, *Andover Union* seems to be the only one (out of more than a thousand of them, with which the kingdom is now cursed,) in which the management and the proceedings have been, in any tolerable degree, investigated and laid before the public. As then all the Unions emanate from the same source—are subject to the same Laws, and to the same despotic governors,—we may conclude that the *administration* of all is pretty nearly the same. What it has been at Sheffield, (very like that at Andover,) has been shewn; it may, therefore, be well to see in *what* respects the two agree.

First then, as to the Governor of Andover:—He has been proved to have been, since holding the office, what may be termed, a wicked brute. What he might have been before, (for that office is enough to corrupt the unstable,) has not appeared. He is a married man, with grown up daughters,—himself not young,—and having the government (moral and religious,) of perhaps hundreds of females of all ages. These—as far as suited his taste—it has been his object (Crosland-like,) to corrupt and induce them to become his victims, (the Bishop of London's bastardly clause screening him from harm,) in adultery and fornication,—of course in other sins. Besides this, he has been a notorious drunkard—going from one public house to another throughout the place, particularly on the Saturday evening, being, as it appears, with him a preparation of the coming Sabbath,—seldom getting home till (fetched and guarded) near midnight. When got home, he began broils with his wife, greatly abusing her, and disturbing the dying paupers, and the whole house,—especially the female servants, who were compelled to secure the fire arms, lest he should, in his frenzy, shoot somebody.

The *religious duties* of the house appear to have been left entirely to him, particularly the reading of the *public prayers*, in doing which, he was frequently so drunk as not to know what he said,—to the amusement of the young and vile, and to the disgust of the pious aged paupers. The hungry and the sick were deprived, by him, of their scanty diet, and the requisite medicine (gin, &c.,) which the doctor ordered for them. Clothes, provisions, bedding, and various other things, were sent from the Union to his married daughter and others. His accounts were very irregular, and incorrectly kept. Such is the man under whose almost despotic sway the poor of, perhaps, a dozen parishes, have for many years been kept. The quantity and quality of food allowed the paupers (excepting the dripping butter) is not stated. It was, however, such as to make the paupers, when they had been long in the House, glad to *gnaw old bones*, and eat raw potatoes.

As I have always affirmed that few but the vilest of characters would administer the wicked Law, we will now, after having seen what the Governor is, examine what the Guardians of the poor of the said Union are. There appears to be almost forty of them, all of whom, (with the exception of about three,) the Rev. Chairman included, are strong *defenders* of the Governor, stating him to be very eligible for the situation which he holds;—probably when the Gentlemen dine at the Board, the Governor provides for them something better than old bones to gnaw! They appear to consist principally of low ignorant farmers, caring little for the sufferings of either

rational or irrational creatures, if they can gain a penny by them. Men, who wont formerly to enjoy a bull or bear baiting, or a drunken gluttonous feast, much more than relieving the poor.

But there are three Reverend Divines (one of them the Chairman of the Union, and a magistrate,) who *publicly* come *voluntarily* forwards (unless they have had orders from the Bishop of London or Chester) to express their conviction of the fitness of the adulterous, drunken, blasphemous, violent Governor, for the awful important situation which he occupies! This, certainly, is most horrible, whether they are makers of *long prayers* or not, they are assuredly *devourers of widow's houses*. Instead of seeking to *save souls*, they are taking the way to destroy them. (Alas! that there should be such near Sheffield.—I hope not IN IT.) Whether the Governor loses *his* place or not, I am sure that *they* ought to lose theirs, whether they have *bought* them or not. It does not appear that any of the Reverend Divines—the friends of the Governor—attend at all to the religion of the poor,—they seem to think *him* quite competent.

The foregoing seems certainly bad enough; but what says the mighty Gog-Magog Despotie Trio, who are worshipped in that Temple of Baal, called Somerset House, in the British Babylon? Say! Why, they *say* that they neither know what to *say*, nor what to *do*! The fact is, that they are at their wits' end; (no long journey, truly.) They were at first greatly alarmed at the *dry bones*; and (as they four times did to Sheffield) they sent down one of their Evil Spirits to make truth appear to be falsehood;—to impede justice, (they dread nothing so much as *justice*,) by every means in his power, and to clear the accused, at all events, as *their* despotic thrones might otherwise be dreadfully shaken to their foundation. Unless these three poisonous exotic excrescences, on the Constitution of this country, are removed, and that soon, that Constitution will not be worth either fighting for, or having.

Their well deciplined Agent (like the one sent so often to Sheffield,) did his duty.—He threw every obstacle that he could in the way of the investigation. He insulted his superior opponent. He sought to puzzle and brow-beat the witnesses. He praised the Governor and Guardians; but he found that he had met with more than his match, in the Counsel employed; and, after ten or twelve days' fighting, he took to his heels, and absolutely ran away in the night,—no one knowing where he was gone to. Why was he not advertised? His alarmed Masters, (to whom he had fled) however, sent him back again, to fight a little longer; but all would not do,—he again ran away; the hired advocate run away; the Governor run away; the Reverend Pious Magistrate Chairman and his Reverend Brethren run away; and, at last—the Guardians themselves run away,—leaving the Accuser and his Counsel to settle the matter between themselves, and, I suppose, (as at Sheffield,) to pay the piper;—for the winner by the *New Law* is saddled with the expenses. *How long will the enslaved and insulted people of England bear this?*

The two great peculiar blessings distinguishing this country from all others, are said to be the *Liberty of the Press*, and the *Trial by Jury*, as said to be enjoyed equally by all. These constitutional British blessings, the tyrannical New Poor Law has, however, totally abolished. They are now no more possessed here than they are in other countries, viz:—by a privileged order, while millions of Britons have the Public Press completely closed to them. The strongest claims of country, of liberty, of humanity, and of religion, are denied admission, if they at all denounce the deceitful effects of a diabolical ruinous system, of the enormous unjust proceeds of which a considerable share falls to the lot of the Editors of public prints; while almost everything that can serve to palliate and support the abominable system, which brings so much grist to their mills, is seized upon with avidity for insertion. Hence it is, that though we have at Sheffield three such publications—all differing on religious and political subjects—they have all been long agreed in shutting out all my writings in reprobation of the God-defying Poor Law, though the horrors of it here have been shewn to be fully equal to what they have been at Andover; in many respects much more horrible. I have, consequently, for years been driven in this way to oppose it, though at enormous expense. Yet these Gentlemen are offended at being told that they

are mercenary.* Alas, for Christ's religion, if the wages of mammon of it! while whole columns of these prints are filled thrice verbatim the same foolish gabble, of our innumerable new created orators, *on trundling*, and such important subjects, no one of them has afforded a column to the horribly disgusting proceedings at *Andover*, which have, during a month, been filling, day after day, the columns of the truly *Independent Times*, which is now labouring in the cause of justice and humanity, and shake the diabolical Act to its foundation. Yes! the press is at liberty! it makes use of that liberty (for filthy lucre's sake) to destroy both the lives and the lives of the often-truly respectable pauper poor. So much, then the present *Liberty of the Press!*

Well! but we have still the *Trial by Jury!* Yes, the *rich* have! but there are now millions of Britons who have it not. True! but then they are they who are guilty of the *Crime of Poverty!* They, who are so guilty, possess such security now; for either property, liberty, or lives, neither for children, husbands, nor wives. Those very wives, or their grown-up daughters, may now be taken away from them, and polluted almost before their faces, without their possessing a remedy from any but the very wretches who are the authors of the crimes, and who baton on the spoils of oppression enormous salaries. *Trial by Jury!* Where are the Jury? Where are the Judges attending to, and deciding on the trials' proceeding at *Andover*? Where were they on the trials at *Attercliffe*, *Ecclesall*, and *Sheffield?* *Trial by Jury!* *Trials by Demons!* for they are nothing better.

Never was earthly Law so heavenly, so blessed, and so blessing as our *OLD Poor Law.* During hundreds of years the country prospered under all parties and classes were benefitted and satisfied;—mismanagement, licentiousness, or rascality in its conductors, was scarcely ever heard of. They often shrunk from the office, which they were compelled to accept; they were men of respectability, and they did their duty. They wanted splendid, no expensive accommodations for themselves; but they sought to lighten the heavy burdens of the poor, whom God had appointed and commanded them—to succour. For that purpose, and for that purpose alone were the rates applied. This security, from the fatal effects of poverty in old age, was granted to the poor, in lieu of their long possessed expensive vile practices of beggary and robbery,—a bargain by which all were gainers, a bargain which was as constitutional and binding, as that of tithes on the Reformed Church. Our wicked Rulers, however, have deprived them of their right, without restoring to them their former ones.

Now, I do affirm that the poor have not forfeited their then conferred rights any more than the Clergy have done. But what would the latter say and do had the *Reformed Parliament* passed *A Tithe Law Amendment Act*, by which in future, in lieu of tithes, three Laymen were to decide what should be allowed them, from whose despotic decision no appeal lay? I guess that there would have been a pretty sort of a kick-up throughout the country. There would scarcely have been a cushion in any pulpit (except *St. John's* where there are only four sermons in a year,) that would not have wanted mending in a month. There are two reasons, however, why the Clergy need not be afraid of this:—First, the *great tithes* are almost all (directly or indirectly) in the hands of *great men*;—and great men have almost all little (i. e. younger) sons, for whom there are now but few other ways of providing. Hence the liberality of the Legislature in promoting Church building and endowing. Secondly, the Clergy possess such great power and influence (like *East and West India proprietors*,) that Ministers dare not to offend them. As regards the pauper poor, the case is different,—they possess no influence at all, except with God. Millions of them may be brought to subsist on gnawing bones, without being able to help themselves, by asserting those rights which they ought to possess as firmly as the Clergy do their tithes, and the privileged orders those estates which they became possessed of subject to affording the poor their rights. Thus the poor perish, and no man regardeth; but God regardeth! He will plead their cause, and spoil the soul of those that spoil them. For the oppression of the needy, and for the sigh of the poor, will I arise saith the Lord."

* The *Mercury* talks of only a *mess of pottage*; but if so, it must be larger than Benjamin's mess, and often replenished!

(*W. Ford, Printer, York-street, Sheffield.*)

APPENDIX.

Since this little Work was in the press, I have received a message (by a friend, who is a Guardian of the Poor,) from Mr. Rodgers to say, that he much wished that I would call upon him at the Workhouse, as he felt fully assured that he should be able to convince me that all was right respecting him: that his intention, when he accepted of his present situation, was to enforce strictly, that Law which required his services. He was not, he said, a maker or alterer of the Law, but an enforcer of it, (as it might exist at the time being, for it was not like the law of the Medes and Persians.) This, as far as he could comprehend it, he said he would do. He however stated that he soon found that that could not be done at *Sheffield*,—*the people would not suffer it*. He therefore found that there would be no way for him but to try to compromise the matter, by modifying the Law of the GREAT THREE of Somerset House, by the will of the little people of Sheffield. So annoying, he said, had this been to him, that he greatly regretted that he had ever come here. This is the substance of what I believe he wished to be stated to me.

As to my calling and conversing with Mr. R., (while he remains under the dark cloud in which he has been enveloped ever since he came, is certainly what I *shall not do!* What I have said of him, has been said publicly,—let, then, his answer or explanation be the same. I have always found, that whenever or wherever secrecy exists, regarding public transactions and men in public situations, it is accompanied by disgraceful transactions. I pay very little regard to *professions*, unless they be accompanied by corresponding *doings*. I have no doubt but that if I had called upon and listened to the assertions of Messrs. Crosland, Slater, Wilkinson, or any other New Poor Law worthies, each of them would have made it appear (beyond my refuting) that they were, one and all, most *honourable men*. This too, would no doubt have been the case, as regards every one (with scarce an exception) of that notable batch of GUARDIANS OF THE POOR, who were the death of poor Whitaker,—men, who threw about twenty most pitiable *Lunatics* into a den at Attercliffe, as bad as the Black Hole at Calcutta, to be tormented—without redress—by two demons in the human shape.—Men too, who recklessly *squandered* (to serve themselves and their friends,) enormous sums of public money, which they had to borrow on high interest, leaving it to be raised and paid by their successors as they can.—Men, who got well paid for their trouble, by serving the House with goods at high prices, from their own shops. All these would have made it clearly apparent—I doubt not—that there was not a single scoundrel among them all.

Though I know not who Mr. Rodgers is,—and probably never saw him—I think that I have a shrewd guess *what* he is. Such deficient knowledge would not however induce me (I think not any one of the Guardians) if I had large property, with wife and child-

ren, to leave behind me—to entrust the whole to his care, with making strict enquiry, and obtaining satisfactory information. No I do think that if I was a Guardian of the Poor, and was not as careful of the property and persons of the poor entrusted to me, as should had they been my own, I should have been a wicked man and an unjust steward. Mr. Rodgers is, I conceive, (like all other officials under the diabolical Law,) striving to serve *two masters*, order to keep his emoluments, and, but for those who have taught the people of Sheffield not to suffer tamely the Poor to be brought *gnaw old dry bones*, he might have succeeded. His masters (like himself and Lord Melbourne,) only want money, and a *quiet life*.

If I was to see and converse with Mr. R. for a whole day, I feel that I should not be able to convince him that the New Law,—being wholly and solely the work of the devil and his agents, and consequently, in all parts opposed to the whole Law of God,—cannot, by any modifications, be altered so as to be endured by any true christian in a christian country, for everything and every body attached to it, are opposed to *God and His Laws*.

Though I have freely stated my opinion respecting Mr. and Mr. Rodgers, I do not think that it would be advisable to change them on the contrary, I am of opinion that much worse ones might succeed them. The fact is, no *good man* can hold the situation, because in accepting it, he binds himself to *man*, to violate the Laws of *God*. This Mr. Rodgers finds—and he is therefore striving to serve *both* by which he serves *neither*—that the horrors inflicted on the Poor by the accursed New Poor Law, in particular Unions may be mitigated he has found, by what has been done here. My twelve years' effort to serve the Poor, by opposing the Law, have not, it seems, been wholly thrown away. This Mr. R. has found, therefore, if he must serve both God and his three Somerset House Idols, he might as well, at any rate while he stays, let the former have a larger share for the latter, he may rest assured, will not venture to molest him for it,—they want a quiet life.

DRY BONES.

“The spirit said unto me, Son of man, can these *bones* live? answered and said, Lord, thou knowest.” Yes! if God wills, these *dry bones can live!* They can live to destroy the great destroyer, (the New Poor Law,) who, for ten years, has, like the pestilence, walked at noon day, throughout the length and the breadth of this wicked land,—slaying his thousands and his tens of thousands of those who he found guilty of **POVERTY!** If the Almighty wills, they *will live* to shake the mightiness of the kingdom, to haunt the lordly oppressors through the midnight hours, banishing sleep, and (like the vision of death) causing their hearts to die within them. The mighty ones—the wearers of mitres and coronets—who have braved the commands of Omnipotence, to do justly and to love mercy, will quake with fear at the rattling of these re-animated **DRY BONES!**

WM. FORD, PRINTER, YORK-STREET, SHEFFIELD.



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