VARIOUS

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Содержание

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ON PAUPERISM, AND ITS TREATMENT

"If I oft
Must turn elsewhere – to travel near the tribes
And fellowships of men, and see ill sights
Of maddening passions mutually inflamed;
Must hear humanity in fields and groves
Pipe solitary anguish; or must hang
Brooding above the fierce confederate storm
Of sorrow, barricadoed evermore
Within the walls of cities – may these sounds
Have their authentic comment!"

Wordsworth.

In order to deal effectively with pauperism, it is necessary to know the causes which lead to the impoverishment of individuals and masses of individuals, and to be familiar with the condition, manners, customs, habits, prejudices, feelings, and superstitions of the poor.

We do not propose to institute an elaborate inquiry into the *causes of pauperism*, or to make the topic a subject of separate investigation. Our chief object will be, to collect into classes those of the poor who are known, from personal observation, to become chargeable to parishes, which process will afford abundant scope for remark upon the causes which led to their impoverishment. We may require the company of the reader with us in the metropolis for a short space, and may satisfy him that he need not travel ten miles from his own door in search of valuable facts, and at the same time convince him *that pauperism is not that simple compact evil* which many would wish him to believe. We might also show that, in the metropolis and its suburbs, there exist types of every class of poor that can be found in the rural and manufacturing districts of England; just as it might be shown, that its inhabitants consist of natives of every county in the three kingdoms. Its fixed population, according to the quarter in which they live, would be found to resemble the inhabitants of a great town, a cathedral city, or a seat of manufactures. And that portion of its inhabitants which may be regarded as migratory, would complete the resemblance, except that the shadows would be deeper and the outline more jagged. These persons make London their winter-quarters. At other seasons they are employed by the farmer and the grazier. It is a fact, that the most onerous part of the duties of the metropolitan authorities are those which relate to these migratory classes. Among them are the most lawless and the most pauperised of the agricultural districts. Others, during the spring, summer, and autumn months, were engaged, or pretend that they were engaged (and the statement cannot be tested,) in the cutting of vegetables, the making of hay, the picking of pease, beans, fruit, and hops, and in harvest work. Or they travelled over the country, frequenting fairs, selling, or pretending to sell, knives, combs, and stay-laces. Or they were knife-grinders, tinkers, musicians, or mountebanks. As the winter approaches, they flock into the town in droves. There they obtain a precarious subsistence in ways unknown; some pick up the crumbs that fall from the rich man's table, others overcrowd the workhouses. It would lead to many curious and useful results if this matter were fully investigated. The

reader's company is not, however, required for this purpose; at the same time, the previous remarks may, in some measure, prepare his mind for the consideration of kindred topics. It may introduce a train of reflection, and prompt him to inquire whether the wandering habits of these outcasts have been in any degree engendered by the strict workhouse system and workhouse test enforced in their native villages, by the destruction of cottages, and the breaking up of local associations, and whether these habits have been fostered by the facilities with which a bed and a mess of porridge may be obtained at the unions, without inquiry into their business and object in travelling.

Let us steer our course along the silent "highway," the Thames, and make inquiries of the few sailor-looking men who may still be seen loitering at the several "stairs;" we shall learn that not many years since these narrow outlets were the marts of a thriving employment, and that there crowds of independent and privileged watermen plied successfully for fares. These places are now forsaken, and the men have lost their occupation. Some still ply; and the cry at a few stairs, of "Boat, your honour?" may still be heard. Others have been draughted into situations connected with the boat companies, which support them during the summer months. A large number swell the crowds of day-labourers, who frequent the legal quays, the sufferance wharves, and the docks. And the rest, unfitted by their age or habits to compete with labourers accustomed to the other fields of occupation, sink lower and lower; sustained for a time by the helping hands of comrades and old patrons, but at last obliged to seek a refuge at the parish workhouse. Death also does his part. At Paul's Wharf stairs, a few inches above high-water mark, a few shrubs have been planted against the river wall – and above them is a small board, rudely cut, and on it are inscribed these words, – "To the memory of old Browny, who departed this life, August, 26, 1846." Let us stroll to the coach offices. Here again we see a great change – great to the common eye of the public, who miss a raree show, and a still greater one to the hundreds and thousands of human beings whose subsistence depended upon the work done at those places. A few years ago, the reader may have formed one of a large group of spectators, collected at the "Peacock" at Islington, to witness the departure of the night mails, on the high north road. The cracking of whips, the blowing of horns, the prancing horses, the bustle of passengers and porters, and the consciousness of the long dreary distance they had to go, exercised an enduring influence upon the imagination and memory of the youthful observer. Now, a solitary slow coach may be sometimes seen. In those days, all the outlets of the metropolis presented similar scenes. Then call to remembrance the business transacted in those numerous, large, old-fashioned, square-galleried inn-yards; and reflect upon the hundreds who have been thrown out of bread. The high-roads and the way-side inns are now forsaken and silent. These remarks are not made merely to show that there is an analogy between the several districts and employments in the metropolis, and those of the country. If this were all, not another word would be written. But it so happens that the comparison affords an opportunity, which cannot be passed over, of referring to the changes which are going on in the world; and forcibly reminds us, that while some are rising, others are falling, and many are in the mire, trodden under foot, and forgotten. It is with the miserable beings who are in the last predicament, that poor-laws have to do.

The political economist may be right when he announces, that the introduction of machinery has, on the whole, been beneficial; and that the change of employment from one locality to another, depends upon the action of natural laws, of which he is merely the expositor. It may be the case, too, that he is attending carefully to the particular limits of his favourite science, when he occupies his mind with the laws themselves, rather than with their aberrations. But those who treat upon pauperism as an existing evil, to be dealt with now, should remember that they have to do not with natural laws, as they are separated and classified in the works of scientific men, but with the laws in all their complexity of operation, and with the incidents which arise from that complexity.

The coachmen, the guards, the ostlers, the horse-keepers, the harness-makers, the farriers, the various workers in the trade of coach-builders, and the crowd of tatterdemalions who performed all sorts of offices, – where are they? The inquirer must go into the back streets and alleys of London.

He must search the records of benevolent institutions; and he must hold frequent converse with those who administer parochial relief. But his sphere must not be confined to the metropolis. Let the reader unroll his library map of England, and devote an entire afternoon to the study of it. Trace the high-roads with a pointer. Pause at every town, and at every stage. Refer to an old book of roads, and to a more modern conveyance directory. Let memory perform its office: reflect upon the crowds of persons who gained a subsistence from the fact that yourselves and many others were obliged to travel along the high-road on your way from London to York. There were inn-keepers, and waiters and chambermaids, post-boys and "boots." Then there were hosts of shop-keepers and tradesmen who were enabled to support their families decently, because the stream of traffic flowed through their native towns and villages. Take a stroll to Hounslow. Its very existence may be traceable to the fact that it is a convenient stage from London. It was populous and thriving, and yet it is neither a town, a parish, nor a hamlet. Enter the bar of one of the inns, and take nothing more aristocratic than a jug of ale and a biscuit. Lounge about the yard, and enter freely into conversation with the superannuated post-boys who still haunt the spot. You will soon learn, that it is the opinion of the public in general, and of the old post-boys in particular, that the nation is on the brink of ruin; and they will refer to the decadence of their native spot as an instance. The writer was travelling, not many months ago, in the counties of Rutland, Northampton, and Lincoln; and while in conversation with the coachman, who then held up his head as high, and talked as familiarly of the "old families," whose mansions we from time to time left behind us, as if the evil days were not approaching, our attention was arrested by the approach of a suite of carriages with out-riders, advancing rapidly from the north. An air of unusual bustle had been observed at the last way-side inn. A waiter had been seen with a napkin on his arm, not merely waiting for a customer, but evidently expecting one, and of a class much higher than the travelling bagmen: and this was a solitary way-side inn. We soon learnt that the cortège belonged to the Duke of – . The coachman added, with a veneration which referred much more to his grace's practice and opinions than to his rank, – "He always travels in this way, – he is determined to support the good old plans," and then, with a sigh, continued, "It's of no use – it's very good-natured, but it does more harm than good; it tempts a lot of people to keep open establishments they had better close. It's all up."

It is not necessary to pursue this matter further. Nor is it required that we should follow these unfortunates who have thus been thrown out of bread, or speculate upon their fallen fortunes. Nor need we specially remind the reader, that this is only one of many changes which have come upon us during the last quarter of a century, and which are now taking place. Space will not permit a full exposure of the common fallacy, that men soon change their employments. As a general rule, it is false. The great extent to which the division of labour is carried, effectually prevents it. Each trade is divided into a great many branches. Each branch, in large manufactories, is again divided. A youth selects a branch, and by being engaged from day to day, in the same manipulation, he acquires, in the course of years, an extraordinary degree of skill and facility of execution. He works on, until the period of youth is beginning to wane; and then his particular division, or branch, or trade, is superseded. Is it not clear that the very habits he has acquired, his very skill and facility in the now obsolete handicraft, must incapacitate him for performing any other kind of labour, much less competing with those who have acquired the same skill and facility in those other branches or trades?

The most important preliminary inquiry connected with an improved and extended form of out-door relief is, how can the mass of pauperism be broken up and prepared for operation? We are told that the total number of persons receiving relief in England and Wales is 1,470,970, of which 1,255,645 receive out-door relief. Without admitting the strict accuracy of these figures, we may rest satisfied that they truly represent a dense multitude. It is the duty of the relieving officers to make themselves acquainted with the circumstances of each of these cases, and to perform other duties involving severe labour. The number of relieving officers is about 1310. This mass is broken up and distributed among these officers, not in uniform numerical proportion, but in a manner which would

allow space and number to be taken into account. The officer who is located in a thickly populated district, has to do with great numbers; while the officer who resides in a rural district, has to do with comparative smallness of numbers, but they are spread over a wide extent of country. The total mass of pauperism is thus divided and distributed; but division and distribution do not necessarily involve classification, and they ought not to be regarded as substitutes for it.

To the general reader, the idea of the classification of the many hundreds of thousands of paupers, and the uniform treatment of each class according to definite rules, may appear chimerical. To him we may say, Look at the enormous amount of business transacted with precision in a public office, or by a "City firm" in a single day. All is done without noise or bustle. There is no jolting of the machinery, or running out of gear. There is that old house in the City. It has existed more than a hundred years. And it has always transacted business with a stately and aristocratic air, – reminding us of Florence and Venice, and the quaint old cities of Ghent and Bruges. The heads of the house have often changed. One family passed into oblivion. Another, when nature gave the signal, bequeathed his interests and powers to his heirs, who now reign in his stead. But, however rapid, or however complete the revolutions may have been, no sensible interruption occurred in the continued flow of business. The principles of management have apparently been the same through the whole period. Yet, as times changed, as one market closed and another opened, as new lands were discovered, trading stations established and grew into towns, as the Aborigines left the graves of their fathers, and retired before the advance of *civilisation*, and as India became English in its tastes and desires, so did the business and resources of the old house expand, and its machinery of management change. Once in a quarter of a century, a group of sedate looking gentlemen meet in the mysterious back-parlour; a few words are spoken, a few strokes of the pen are made, a few formal directions are given to the heads of departments, a new book is permitted, an addition to the staff is confirmed, and the power of the house is rendered equal to the transaction of business in any quarter of the world, and to any amount. Now, look at this great house of business from the desk. Study the machinery. A young man, perhaps the eldest son of a senior clerk, enters the house, and takes his seat at a particular desk: and there he remains until superannuation or death leaves a vacancy, when he changes his place, from this desk to that, and so on, until old age or death creeps upon him in turn. He is chained daily to the desk's dull wood, and makes entry after entry in the same columns of the same book. This is his duty. He may be unsteady, irregular, inapt, or incorrect, and his being so may occasion his brethren some trouble, and draw down upon himself a rebuke from a higher quarter; but the machinery goes on steadily notwithstanding. Each clerk, or each desk, has its apportioned duty, which continued repetition has rendered habitual and mechanical. In the head's of departments, a greater degree of intellect may appear necessary. It is hardly the fact, however. For the head of the department has passed through every grade – he has laboured for years at each desk, and knows intuitively, as it were, the possible and probable errors. His discernment or judgment is a spontaneous exercise of memory, and resembles the chess-playing skill of one who plays a gambit. Now, what is all this? It is called "official routine." It appears, then, that an extensive business may be transacted steadily and successfully, providing always that a few general rules are laid down, and steadily adhered to, and enforced. *In books these rules are simplified, classified, and rendered permanent.* A book-keeper may imagine that thousands of voices are above him and around him, giving orders and directions, and admonishing to diligence, and accuracy, – all of which are restrained, subdued, and silenced, and yet all are still speaking, without audible utterance, from the pages before him. And in strictness, it would not be a flight of imagination, but a mode of stating a truth which, from its obviousness, has escaped observation. Of course, these books may speak incoherently and discursively, just as the human being will do; and if they do speak, thus the evils which arise are apt to be perpetuated. The books, then, must have a large share of attention, and be carefully arranged. Then they must have a keeper, and his duties must be explicitly stated, and his character and his means of subsistence made dependent upon his accuracy and vigilance. There is then the choice of the person who is to perform the business which

the books indicate and record. The requirements vary in different occupations. In one, strict probity is a grand point; in another, strict accuracy as to time, or skill in distinguishing fabrics and signatures. In some cases, firmness, mildness, and activity, under circumstances of excitement, is required; and these qualities, among others, would appear to be indispensable in parochial and union officers, – if the fact of their oversight did not render it doubtful. The last lesson we learn is, that business should be checked as it proceeds. There are two methods. The one is a system of checks, and is practicable when the business does not occupy much space. The other is a system of minute inspection; there are cases in which both methods may be partially applied, and that of poor-law administration is one of them.

The machinery by which pauperism may be efficiently dealt with, may be thus generally expressed. There would be required: —

First, A Board of Guardians, elected according to law, and with powers and duties defined and limited by legal enactment.

Second, A staff of efficient officers.

Third, A scroll of duties.

Fourth, A set of books, drawn up by men of scientific ability, and submitted to the severest scrutiny of practical men.

Fifth, A system of inspection under the immediate control of the government.

Sixth, District auditors, whose appointment and duties are regulated by the law.

Seventh, And in the negative, the absence of any speculative, interfering, disturbing, and irritating power, which may be continually adding to, varying and perplexing the duties and the management, in attempting to carry into practical operation certain crotchets, and in rectifying resulting blunders.

Much might be said upon each of these requisitions. But we propose rather to limit our remarks, and to turn them in that direction which will afford opportunities for exhibiting the various classes and varieties of poor, and suggesting modes of treatment.

The books which are necessary to enable the several boards of guardians to deal with each individual case, not only as regards the bare fact of destitution, but also with reference, to its causes and remedies, are the Diary or Journal, and the Report Book. The Diary is simple, and may be easily constructed to suit the circumstances of each locality. Every person who has any business to transact, and values punctuality, possesses a Diary, which is drawn up in that form which appears most suitable to his peculiar business or profession. In it is entered the whole of his regular engagements for the day or year, and also those which he makes from day to day. Then on each day, he regularly, and without miss, consults his remembrancer, and learns from thence his engagements for the time being, and so arranges his proceedings. Such a book, drawn up in a form adapted to the nature of the business transacted, and ruled and divided in a manner which a month's experience would suggest, would be, the Diary. It would differ from that raised by the man of ordinary business in the respect that its main divisions would not be daily, but weekly or fortnightly, according as the board held its meetings. It would be kept by the relieving officer, and laid before the Chairman at each Board meeting – it is in fact a "business sheet." The name of each poor person who appears before the Board, and with respect to whom orders are made, would appear in this book on each occasion. And the arrangements of its contents would depend upon the classification of the poor.

The Report Book[1] was briefly commented upon in a former article. Its size should be ample – for it is presumed that each page will record the results of many visits, and be referred to on each occasion that the pauper appears before the Board. The lapse of time between the first entry and the last, may be seven or even ten years.

[1] See No. CCCLXXIII, page 555.

PROPOSED FORM OF THE RELIEVING OFFICER'S REPORT BOOK

No. I	Names of Dependent Family.	Date of Birth	Residence	Present Relief		The circumstances as they existed when visited by R. O., &c.	Orders of the Board, and Remarks
				Money. s. d.	Bread lb.		
						Visited Dec. 16, 1846.	
						Visited, &c.	
						Visited.	
The cause and date of first application.							
The Facts of the history of the case, abstracted to the date of the last visit							
Relations who, according to law, should assist.							
Friends who do assist, or are likely to do so.							

This report is prepared from the actual visit of the relieving officer at the home of the applicant, and by coincidental inquiry. Upon its first reading, there would appear the names of the heads of the family – the names of their children who may be dependent upon them, and the several dates of birth, the residence, the occupation of the several members of the family, their actual condition, the admitted cause of the application for relief, and a statement of such facts as a single visit may disclose respecting their past history. This would form a basis for a future report, and would lead the guardians to make comparisons, and judge whether the case is rising or falling, having reference not only to weeks, but years. The practical man will perceive, that the chief point of difference between this form of Report Book and that enforced by the Commissioners, is, that the latter speaks of the present only, while the proposed form speaks of the past as well, – an addition of vital importance, if character is to be considered. It is clear, if the past and present condition of the applicant be stated, together with the main facts of his history, the mental act of classification will follow inevitably, and will require merely the mechanical means of expression. It may be stated generally with reference to this book: *First*, Every case must be visited, and reported upon by a statement of facts, not opinions. *Second*, The report must be made returnable on a given day – this would be secured by the Chairman's Diary. *Third*, Each applicant must appear personally before the Board, unless distance or infirmity prevent.

With these books in our possession, we may begin to separate the poor into masses, and collect them into groups. The facts contained in the Report Book would enable Boards of Guardians to decide in which class the applicants ought to be placed. But in order to preserve the classes in their distinctness, a ready and simple mode of grouping them in a permanent manner must be devised; and as it is desirable that old and existing materials should be used in preference to new, the "Weekly Out-Door Relief List," now in daily use, may be made the basis of an improved form.[2]

How are we to proceed? Let the reader call to mind a parish or union with which he is acquainted, and make it the scene of his labours. That period of the year when the demands upon the attention of the Board of Guardians, and its officers, are at zero, may be selected for making the first step in advance. The most convenient season of the year would probably be a late Easter; for at that time the weekly returns for in-door and out-door relief are rapidly descending. The winter is losing its rugged aspect and is rapidly dissolving into spring: and labour is busy in field and market. And so it continues until the fall of the year, except when the temperature of the summer may be unusually high, and then low fever and cholera prevail in low, marshy, crowded, or undrained districts. Those cases which have received relief for the longest period may be taken first. The technicalities of the report may be made up from existing documents. The history of each case may not be so readily prepared. It being a collection of facts, they may be added slowly. The space allotted to this important matter is amply sufficient, unless the officer should unfortunately be afflicted with a plethora of

[2] See next page.

words. The whole number of ordinary cases may be reported upon, and their classes apportioned, before the winter sets in. In the month of November, the *medical list* would begin to be augmented. And as the dreary season for the poor advances, the *casual applications* would multiply. In two or three years the names of all persons who ordinarily receive relief, or are casually applicants, would be found in the Report Book: and the facts having been recorded there, the labours of the officer would then decrease, and be confined to the investigation of existing circumstances.

The reader may have inquired, upon observing the number of classes into which the recipients of relief are proposed to be arranged, how can accuracy be ensured – how can they be preserved intact? It is admitted, that unless the grounds of the distinctions are clearly defined, and the facts of frequent occurrence, the classes will manifest a tendency to amalgamation. If the reader will take the trouble to refer to the form of "Weekly Relief List" below,[3] he will perceive that the fourth, fifth, and sixth classes, have but one column. This was done, because it might be deemed that the distinctions which are there noted might escape the observation of Boards of Guardians. It is not our opinion. We have great confidence in the yeomanry and gentry of England, of whom Boards of Guardians are composed; and we believe that much of the bitter animosity manifested by the local boards against the triumvirate at Somerset House, owes its existence to the authoritative attempts on the part of the latter to prevent these boards from recognising in any practical manner these very distinctions. Independently of this, the period for which the relief is ordered may be so determined as to allow of a particular time for each class; this will be made clear as we proceed. And, lastly, a brief and accurate description of each of the classes may be printed at the head of each of the pages of the Diary, Report Book, and Relief List.

The first class consists of aged and infirm persons who have no natural relations, but are enabled to eke out a subsistence with the aid of an out-door allowance from the parish. The poor of this class are frequently in receipt of other relief. It may be a tribute of memory from a child she nursed, from a family he served, an occasional donation from the church they attend, or a weekly trifle from one of those benevolent societies that assist the aged poor to retain their accustomed dwelling, or to enjoy the unexpensive luxuries which habit has made necessary. The circumstances of each of the individuals in these classes are presumed to be known through the report of the officer; and as each case, when health and vicinity of residence permit, appears personally before the board, it may be *carried forward for revisal that day twelve months*. The whole of the cases belonging to this class would be so treated. They may be distributed over a given number of Board days, and during a particular month of the year. In the month of July all the names of the poor of this class would appear in the Diary; and the reports of the relieving officer would then be called for, in the order in which the names are entered. Of course, if any change of circumstances should occur in the interval, application may be made to the officer; and as they are paid at their homes in the majority of instances, the application may then be made. At the end of twelve months, each case is formally revisited and reported. It would then appear that some are dead, some are bed-ridden, some are childish, and require an asylum – second childhood has commenced, and they require the nurture of children; they are therefore admitted into the Union. A few others have lost a bounty through the death of a friend, and their allowance requires augmentation.

The entrance to this class should be carefully guarded against admission by accident or undue influence. For instance, a lady not indisposed to relieve human suffering, receives an indirect application from a respectable elderly female, for charitable aid. Her charitable list is full, but she does not like to send her empty away, although she knows nothing of the person except through the

[3] Form 25 (*a.*)Weekly Out-Door Relief List, for the quarter ending 18 , District. Relieving Officer.It is possible that a union maybe found in which the number of poor are so few, as to allow of the four orders of poor – the Ordinary, the Medical, the Casual, and the Unclassified – to be contained in one book; but in general it would be necessary to separate them and to appropriate a book to each order; and there are parishes so large, and in which certain classes of poor abound, as to require separate books for those particular cases.

excellent note of introduction. Temporary relief is given. The lady's husband has an intimate friend, who is a guardian. And, through this medium, the female becomes an applicant for parochial relief. Forms are complied with. A sketch of her circumstances is entered in the Report Book, with such accuracy as the fact of the report being required at the next board meeting permitted. Her name appearing at the end of the page of the Diary which now lies before the chairman, and her turn having come, the guardian blandly informs the meeting, that a case has come to his knowledge, of whose fitness to be a recipient of their bounty he is credibly informed there can be no doubt; and the chairman is only too certain that a case so brought before them should be liberally responded to. An unusual amount of relief is given, and the name put on the yearly list. And thus, a decent person, who had by sometimes working, and by sometimes receiving those occasional aids to which her long life of probity and prudence had given her a title, is beguiled into that which it had really been the great object of her life to avoid. Thousands who have been accustomed to a life of labour, and especially those females who have lived in decent servitude, regard the workhouse with horror. Now, to avoid errors of this kind, and also to ensure that the necessities of the case are thoroughly known, it ought to be a "standing order" of the board that no case shall be draughted into the yearly list, without having been visited and reported upon six several times.

The second class consists of those aged and infirm persons who possess relations who are legally liable to be made to contribute towards their support, or who have friends and relations who, in virtue of those social ties which bind men together, may be reasonably expected to assist them. The separation of the individuals of this class from those of the former one, is not made on the single ground that, according to law, sons and unmarried daughters, and grandchildren, call be compelled to support their sires. If the parochial authorities had no stronger appeal than that which the law of Elizabeth affords, the pauper list would soon be filled to overflowing. The law is more correct in principle than efficient in practice. Fortunately, the natural feelings of humanity effect that spontaneously, which the law with its penalties cannot compel. It is a matter of daily remark by those who mix much and observantly among the poor – not the class merely who struggle hard to preserve a decent appearance, and to drive destitution from their dwelling's but those who have no qualities which can engage, whose ordinary habits are those of intemperance, whose manners are rough, and whose language is coarse and obscure – and to a class still lower, who are steeped in vice and crime, who seem regardless of God or man, and to whom society appears to have done its worst; that even in these rude, uncultivated, and depraved human beings, a strong under-current of natural feeling wells up and flows perpetually. So strongly are these feelings sometimes manifested in such characters, that they appear to be developed with an intensity proportionate to the extent to which the other feelings have been wrecked, and to the loss of sympathy which these miserables have sustained from the world. It is too often forgotten by those who are concerned for the poor, that these feelings – the love of parents for offspring, and the reverence of children for parents – are instinctive, and that their activity depends upon the fact, whether there are children to be loved and parents to be revered. And this being so, we may be satisfied that they are not extinct in any case. They may not be expressed in good set terms, or in the ordinary language of endearment. The conversation of these persons may sound harsh to unaccustomed ears, and the acts may often coincide with the words. But the bond of union is seen in acts of mutual defence, in acts of mutual aggression, and in acts of mutual assistance. The true ground of separation is, that it would be highly inexpedient, and prejudicial to public morals, if the duties of these relations were to be forgotten or superseded. And, therefore, when it appears from the relieving officer's report that such connexions exist, the cases should be relieved of course; but it should be intimated that these parties are expected to assist; and it should be formally declared, that they are legally and morally bound so to do. In the majority of instances, the result would be satisfactory. This is not said because a trifle might be saved to parishes. It would most frequently happen, that all these parties could do would be to add a luxury very dear to the aged person, but which the parochial board could hardly grant. A daughter in service may send an article

of apparel, a son-in-law may give a Sunday's dinner, and a son may make a weekly contribution of grocery. In general, it being presumed that the several boards of guardians present a fair average of human nature, no reduction of allowance would ensue. In many instances the result flowing from this method would be still more satisfactory. It so happens in the strife for subsistence, that each striver is so occupied by his own affairs – and even when increased ability or established probity and diligence, has led, to the receipt of a higher wage, the mind is either so entirely absorbed by the new duties and increased responsibilities, or luxuries have so stealthily slipped from their places and become necessities – that he is apt to forget his poorer brethren, who, less fortunate than himself, or unblessed with his own patience and steadiness —

"Poor wights! nae rules nor roads observin',
To right or left eternal swervin',
They zig-zag on,
'Till, curst with age obscure and starvin',
They aften groan."

The attention of this prosperous relation must be arrested. Here is a fact. A man at the advanced age of seventy-six years, and his wife still more aged, applied for relief. He is a mechanic. He had never applied for relief during the threescore years and ten, and upwards, to which his life has spun out. Assistance was rendered. The law of settlement intervened, occasioned much trouble, and prevented the case from being dealt with permanently. This hinderance afforded an opportunity for the relations to consult and arrange. One son is at work in a distant county. Another is a mechanic with a full wage; he has four children – but he is industrious and temperate. The daughter is married to a clerk in a lawyer's office, and has already two children. No magistrate would make an "order of maintenance" upon the sons, and the daughter being married is not liable. But a consultation is held of relations and friends. That member of the family upon whom there can be no legal demand, and whose circumstances are the least flourishing, is the first to make a proposal. He will take the old lady home: she can have a chair in the chimney-corner, and mind the children when their mother is away. The son in the country will give one or two shillings weekly, according as work is abundant. The son in town will guarantee the payment for the old man's lodging. The right to a meal is not thought of – it is a matter of course. The old man had supposed that his work on earth was done; and he had therefore fallen into despondency. But the events of the last week have restored him to that elasticity of mind which had sustained him through many trials. Hope is again in the ascendant, and pours upon him her genial influence. His helpmate is provided for; and he has a home secured to himself, and is not in danger of starvation. He now says, "There is some work left in me yet." He can no longer be the first in the throng, but he can take his place in the crowd. He can do all sorts of odd, light, casual jobs; and by the exercise of that perseverance and care, which enabled him during his long life to drive want from his homestead, he can provide for the future. He is no longer an applicant for parochial relief. This class may be easily distinguished, practically, from the former one, and from all others, without making any distinction or reference to the mode or value of the relief. Each case, after it has been visited and reported upon by the officer six several times, in the same way, and for the same reasons as class number one, must be carried forward in the chairman's Diary to that board day in the summer months which has been appropriated for the class. *This class would undergo revision twice in the year.* The reports of the officer would especially refer to the circumstances of relations, and state the assistance which they do or are able to render. All this would become matter of routine.

The third class differs from the two former, in respect that the individuals who compose it are not aged, but are likely to be permanent burdens on parishes, from malformation of brain, or a disturbance in the sensuous system. They are idiotic, fatuous, blind, deaf or lame, or permanently disabled by chronic disease. It has been said that the workhouse is the best place for such persons;

and in some localities it may be so. But there are places, where benevolent expedients have been adopted, which have saved these unfortunates from that stagnation of soul approaching melancholia, to which they would have been otherwise doomed. They may now hold converse in books. They are taught trades. They receive assistance which enables them to enter fields of competition with their more perfectly organised fellows. But this aid is often-times withheld, or it is insufficient, and so they become chargeable to parishes.

The fourth class consists of those widows with families upon whom the officer, after a series of visits, is enabled to report facts which must satisfy the guardians that she is industrious, temperate, and of strict probity. Her thoughts as a wife were confined to two great domestic questions, – how can my husband's income be economised, without making his home no home? and how can I qualify my children to fill their appointed stations in life? During the lifetime of her husband, her mind was so entirely absorbed by her household and family duties, that now she feels and acts like one who has just been disturbed from a long and troubled dream. Death has now turned the channel of her ideas. The change was one of bitter suffering. And now she must provide bread for her children by her own "hand-labour," – without the habitude of labour. Death acts thus daily; and yet the number of widows so circumstanced, who apply for parochial relief, bears a very small proportion to the total number of persons thus bereaved. The fact is curious; and as sound methods of dealing with pauperism can be discovered only from a minute and comprehensive knowledge of the anatomy and pathology of the lower classes of society, the facts must be studied. The widows who compose this class were, previous to their marriage, either trusted servants in quiet families, daughters of respectable shop-keepers, or younger daughters of widows with small annuities: and their husbands were probably members of religious communities. Suppose the condition of the widow to have been that of a decent servitude. She performed her duties with credit; and her name is not forgotten. During the state of wifehood, intercourse was kept up by the exercise of kindly greetings on the one side, and respectful inquiries on the other. Her present circumstances excite sympathy. "Something *must* be done for poor Ann!" But she desires to subsist by labour rather than by gifts of charity. This is thought of by the reflecting patron, who knows full well how benefits unearned weaken the moral powers. But there are many ways by which the feeling of charity may be manifested without moral injury. A son may be in chambers, and who can so well clean and arrange them, as the nurse of his infancy? She may be intrusted with the care of an office; or she may be recommended to friends, who have hitherto taken labour from the labour market, at the lowest market price, and are just beginning to perceive that the moral qualities manifested in a prudent carriage, strict honesty, and taciturnity with respect to private affairs, are valuable, and have yet to learn that they are not common, and to be obtained must be paid for. The recommendation is well-timed. And although this friend of the family may miss the moral points of the matter, and would, if the patroness had not fixed her wages, by the force of example, tell the widow how little she gave the other "person," and offer the same. The widow's eyes now sparkle. She has reason to be grateful, and is not absolutely dependent. She is now in a fair way to gain an honest livelihood. The parish has not once been thought of. Then she may be a member of a religious body: which congregation is not a question of moment. As a member of the Established Church she has many advantages. Did you, reader, ever hear of a member of the Society of Friends being an applicant for parochial relief? The question may be repeated with respect to the Jews; not, however, with the expectation of an universal negative; but, having regard to the precariousness of their callings, the answer must be —*No!* The widow is a Wesleyan methodist. She is united with a religious body which includes within its pale many of those who compose the middle – or rather the lower middle – and lower classes of society. The members of it are closely cemented together – spiritually and temporally. As a member of a "class meeting," her hopes and fears, her temptations, and trials, are known; not only to the members of her own section, but to the minister, and the members of the congregation. It may be true that the class system engenders spiritual pride and hypocrisy: that is not in point. We are dealing with facts. And it is a fact, and one which might be predicated from the

circumstances, that the frequent meeting together of persons in nearly the same social position, to converse and advise upon practical religious matters, from which personal interests and temporalities, when they bear down the spirit, cannot be excluded, does exert an important influence on the fortunes of the distressed. In the Church of England, a minister may not mix so freely with his flock. His social position – his language, is different. But although that sense of common interest and common danger, which opens the flood-gates of the soul, and allows it to pour forth an uninterrupted tide of emotion, cannot exist when one order of mind stammers to another order of wind, yet there are compensating circumstances. Learning does not necessarily enervate the active powers. And in these latter we find a common ground of meeting, chords which vibrate sympathetically. "One touch of nature makes the whole world kin." Then the clergy are the almoners of the rich. These influences, with many kindred ones, might be investigated with advantage; but enough is said to indicate why this class of poor, who at first sight appear so helpless, are not sustained by the poor-rate. But they are sometimes applicants, and as such form a class. It happens that, from the number of her family, her wants are greater than her limited connexions can relieve; or she may be alone. It must be again repeated, that the duty of a board of guardians is not only to relieve destitution, but likewise to check pauperism. This being so, the widow must not be allowed to sink so low as to drive hope away. Her projects, her means, and her actual necessities must be ascertained. *Relief in money is the best mode of relief to this class*; and it should be given liberally. It will not be given in vain. Of course there are many in this class not gifted with an active temperament, or a strong, mind. To such the warning from the chairman, that parochial assistance can only be temporary, must be frequently given: and sometimes her views and progress may be scrutinised and commented upon. The relief would be continued from time to time and in descending amounts, until it vanishes altogether. By this method of treatment an increase of expenditure may be occasioned for a time; but the widow will be delivered from her affliction, *and her children's names permanently erased from the black roll of pauperism*.

The fifth class includes those widows who have, throughout their lives, been accustomed to labour. They have not the advantages of the former class, as regards connexions. They have been "dragged"[4] up. As an infant, "it was never sung to: no one ever told it a tale of the nursery. It was dragged up, to live or die, as it happened. It had no young dreams: it broke at once into the iron realities of life. The child exists not for the very poor as any object of dalliance; it is only another mouth to be fed, a pair of little hands to be betimes inured to labour. It is the rival, till it can be the co-operator, for food with the parent. It is never his mirth, his diversion, his solace; it never makes him young again, with recalling his young times. The children of the very poor have no young times. It makes the very heart bleed to overhear the casual street-talk between a poor woman and her little girl, a woman of the better sort of poor, in a condition rather above the squalid beings which we have been contemplating. It is not of toys, of nursery-books, of summer holidays, (fitting that age); of the promised sight, or play; of praised sufficiency at school. It is of mangling and clear-starching, of the price of coals, or of potatoes. The questions of the child, that should be the very outpourings of curiosity in idleness, are marked with forecast and melancholy providence. It has come to be a woman before it was a child. It has learned to go to market; it chaffers, it haggles, it envies, it murmurs; it is knowing, acute, sharpened: it never prattles." Such was the child. The passage from the single to the married state, which generally changes the course of woman's life, has to her been nothing more than a brief interval of pleasure. She soon joins the bands of the busy daughters of care. So the loss of her husband has been to her but a tragedy. The last act is over; the curtain has fallen: she is now in the outer world again; she is oppressed by sadness, vague and undefinable; but the noise and bustle around her, the tumult of her own thoughts, and her continued labour, afford that alleviation which the solitary and the unemployed seek for in vain. Those who would step in and, relieve her of her toil, may be well-meaning persons; but, they are interfering in matters they do not understand. They

[4] Elia

would spend their money more beneficially, and with greater regard to the principles of Christian charity, if each would take care that those who do for him any kind of labour, receive an adequate remuneration. It may be a politico-economic law, that we buy in the cheapest market, and sell in the dearest; and, by a sophistical process, the limits of the principle may have been enlarged, so as not only to include raw materials, but manufactured products, and the labour which we ourselves employ. But it is forgotten, that a law which expresses merely what men do, has not the universality or fixity of a law of matter, but is liable to variation from the action of moral causes. The law may be partially true, as eliminated from a study of the present age. It is an age of calculators and economists. In a moral age it would be false. It is false in the present day, when moral men have to do directly with their lower and ruder brethren. This is an individual and personal matter, and each one will find that he has enough of his own work to do in his own sphere. This widow is an applicant for parochial relief. Repeated visits, and a succession of reports, at brief intervals, have enabled the officer to present an accurate narration of facts, both with reference to her past life and her present condition. It becomes clear that this widow differs from the other, in respect that she has greater habitude for labour, and that her mind is cramped down to the hard matters of the present hour: she goes to her work in the morning, and she returns home fatigued in the evening. To-morrow's meal is secured, and the scene of to-morrow's labour is known. Within the narrow limits of a week is her soul penned up. It is clear, then, what the duties of the guardians are. If their wish is to check pauperism, they must attend to that which this widow's limited capacities prevent her from doing. In her young day, reading and writing were accomplishments; but the world has jogged on a little since then, without her knowing it. Reading and writing, as one of the mechanical arts, have become indispensable to every boy and girl. The same economic reasons which lead to the inference, that a girl should be taught to darn her own stockings, or mend her own frock, would also show that a boy and girl should be taught to read and write. The spread of education is something very different from the diffusion of knowledge. So, then, the officer's report would show whether the children are duly sent to school; their progress might also be tested. At a future period, it might appear that the girl is strong enough to enter service, and the boy fit to be apprenticed either to a trade, or to the sea. In either case, the fitness of the master or mistress is ascertained and reported. A premium or outfit is given; and the particulars of the case are duly entered in the appropriate book, according to the existing method, and the master and child visited from time to time. The widow would thus be relieved in that particular respect in which she is least qualified to help herself, and her children are saved. She would soon discover that the time occupied in waiting for relief could be more profitably employed, and she soon ceases to apply.

The sixth class consists also of widows; but they are remarkable for idleness, intemperance, or improvidence. We know of no means of washing the Ethiop white. To this class, money-relief is the most objectionable form of relief. An allowance of bread should be given for brief periods, and given in instalments. Sometimes it may be necessary to intimate that work may be required for the value given, and at other times the order may be made. It will, however, be found that the individuals of this class are careless about every thing. If they are dealt with leniently, they take advantage of the supposed imbecility of the guardians: if they are dealt with too severely, they become familiarised with the interior of a prison; and the instant the gloomy portal of the county jail loses its terrors, they place themselves in attitude of defiance. As the inmates of workhouses, they are dangerous spies, and are regarded with awe by master and matron; as recipients of out-door relief, they are insolent and full of threats. Perhaps the best mode of dealing with these cases may be ascertained, by allowing the attention to become abstracted from the mother, and concentrated upon the children. The mother is like a wild beast, whose nature and habits cannot now be subdued; but her cubs, her little ones, may still be tamed and humanised. At this point, reference may be made to a document which has not emanated from the Poor-law Commissioners, or from any parochial board, but from the magistrates of the county of Middlesex. It appears that a committee was appointed, in April last, to "inquire into the best means of checking the growth of juvenile crime, and promoting the reformation of juvenile

offenders." At a meeting of the magistrates of Middlesex, on the 3d of December, the report of the committee was read, and "received amidst repeated cheering." The committee recommend that a bill should be introduced to Parliament, a draught of which is given in the report. The preamble states, "that the fearful extent of juvenile depravity and crime, in the metropolitan districts, and in large and populous towns, requires general and immediate interference on the part of the legislature; that the great causes of juvenile crime and depravity appear to be ignorance, destitution, and the absence of proper parental or friendly care; and that all children above the age of seven and under the age of fifteen years, suffering from these and similar causes, require protection, to prevent their getting into bad company, acquiring idle and dissolute habits, growing up in vice, and becoming an expense and burden on the county as criminals, and that such protection should be afforded by the county." There are fourteen clauses: the first and fifth may be quoted – "1*st*, That an asylum for unprotected and destitute children be founded in and for the county of Middlesex by legislative enactment, and placed under the direction and management of the justices of the peace for the county." "5*th*, That unprotected and destitute children shall be deemed to include all children above seven, and under fifteen years of age, under the following circumstances: – Children driven from their homes by the bad conduct of their parents; children neglected by their parents; children who are orphans, and neglected by their friends; children who are bastards; and children who are orphans, and have no one to protect them, or to provide for them, or for whom no one does provide; children who, from their own misconduct, have no protection or provision found them; children who are idle and dissolute, and whose parents or friends cannot control their bad conduct; children who are destitute of proper food, clothing, or education, owing to the poverty of their parents or friends, but whose friends or parents do not apply for, or receive parish relief; children who are destitute of employment; and children of the class which become juvenile offenders generally."

It is probable that a plan of this description might have a great and beneficial effect in diminishing juvenile crime; and it is conceivable that the clauses of the bill may be so framed as to develop all the good, and avoid the evil. It is to be feared, however, that the bill is founded on partial views. The children who agree with the descriptions given in clause number five, are the offspring of those who reside in poor neighbourhoods, where the inhabitants are already paying high rates, – high in proportion to the poverty of the locality. If this be so, then every possible species of opposition, which can be offered legally or illegally, will be directed against the bill, and against its being carried into operation. The authorities of these poor and populous parishes already find it a matter of extreme difficulty to collect the rates, and are overwhelmed by the number of those poor housekeepers who apply to be "excused their rates" on the ground of poverty. All the schemes of the present day have one good point only, or it may be discovered by minute observation that the original idea was a good one. The bill is brought forth with a grand display of benevolent feeling; and it is passed, after suffering further distortion in Parliament. The law is, after all, found to be inoperative, from the omission or misapprehension of a plain obvious matter of detail, or because it originated from partial views, or came directly from the brain of an unpractical theorist. It is, however, admitted, in the case of the magistrates' bill, that the *original idea* is a good one. And if it should be realised, the children of the class of widows now under consideration, might in this "County Juvenile Asylum," find a home, and be saved from destruction.

The seventh class consists of women who have cohabited with men, and have families. The individuals composing it generally resemble those of the two classes last mentioned —*i. e.* they are industrious or idle, intemperate or sober. Generally, this class requires relief more urgently than the several classes of widows; because by their past conduct they are shut out from any participation in many of the charities. It is needless to say that strict investigation into their circumstances and proceedings is necessary.

The eighth and ninth classes consist of single women. The eighth is composed of women who have had two children, and are prostitutes; the ninth of those who have only committed the first

offence. The inquiries of the officer, in the ordinary routine, would develop the facts. The utility of this distinction is, that it would afford boards of guardians an opportunity of dealing fairly with the latter class: the fact of the distinction being noted in all the books would attract their attention to the point. To confound these cases together, and to act with, equal severity to all, is obviously unjust. In those unions where the prohibitory order has been issued, all the individuals of both these classes are relieved only in the house. In the case of their admission, the cognisance of this distinction, not casually, not specially, because a guardian may have had his attention drawn to a particular case, but as a matter of routine, would necessarily lead to a good result. No board of guardians, when their attention has been regularly and officially directed to the facts of the case, could compel both classes to herd together in one common room.

The medical relief list is composed of poor persons who are suffering from acute disease, and are, in consequence of their illness and extreme poverty, receiving relief in money or food. Those who are in the receipt of other relief by order of the board, and who belonged to one of the other classes, would be excluded from this list. There are two modes of regulating the medical out-door relief in kind. One mode is to require the medical officers to attend the meetings of the boards of guardians. It is their duty to report upon the state of health of each out-door sick person at specified times, and to state the kind of nutriment adapted to each case. The board is thus furnished with a sanatory report from one officer, and a report upon circumstances from the other. This is a satisfactory system. The other mode is, for the medical officer to report to the relieving officer in a prescribed form, that A B is ill with consumption, and requires – food per diem. The relieving officer has a veto. If, upon visiting the case, he is satisfied that the head of the family can supply the articles recommended, the relief is withheld. The case is reported to the next board, who issue the necessary instructions thereon. The first plan is undoubtedly the preferable one, in all those parishes or unions where the population is large and the area small. But in all large rural unions, where the medical officers are many and their labours great, from bad roads and extent of district, the plan would be inapplicable. As regards the second method, it would be found to prevail as a rule, that, in the majority of cases, the recommendation of the medical officer is regarded by the relieving officer as tantamount to an order. The exception would be in those unions where the board is infested by persons who know of no means of estimating the value of an officer excepting by his supposed power of reducing expenditure; and in those parishes where the inhabitants are poor and embarrassed. And it is to be feared that this evil, against which the press exclaim so loudly, will continue to predominate so long as the existing unequal charge upon parishes continues. The magnates of St. George, Hanover Square, can afford to be magnanimous and humane. In St. Luke, Middlesex, or St. Leonard, Shoreditch, where the rate-payers are poor, it is a different matter altogether. And yet it is in these poor neighbourhoods that the poor live; and where they live, there they must be relieved.

The administration of the relief given in consequence of poverty and illness requires great care. The list contains the most meritorious of the poor: and as the relief given is of the greatest value, it is the relief most sought after by “cadgers” and impostors. The great abuses which creep into the administration of out-door relief do not arise from the relief of the able-bodied, but from affording relief to persons who allege that they are suffering from bodily ailments without proper investigation. In ordinarily well managed parishes, impostors, cadgers, and mendicants have no chance of obtaining relief in money. Therefore the whole of their practised cunning is brought to bear upon this more valuable form of relief. Now, from the peculiar habits of this class of persons, there is often strong ground for the claim. They will starve three days, and complete the week in revel and debauchery. Those periods, which they consider days of prosperity, are too often occasions for emaciating their bodies by drinking gin and eating unnutritious food. A chilly, foggy, November night is the time when the supposed widow can parade her children on the highway with the best chance of exciting the compassion of the passersby; and it is the time, too, when, if there is any predisposition to disease, the circumstances are most favourable for its development. It is to this class that the workhouse

may be offered – as an infirmary. It is a fact, however, that those of this class who suffer from external diseases, and especially those which may be exposed with impunity, do not desire to enter a workhouse, and will not remain there until they are completely cured. And then, with reference to children who are exposed at night in the streets, notwithstanding the parents may be warned that they are sowing the seeds of incurable disease in the bodies of these infants, and are offered relief sufficient to constitute the greater part of their support; yet, however they may promise, they will continue to sleep in the day-time, and prowl about as homeless outcasts in distant neighborhoods at night. It is useless to offer them the workhouse; they will refuse it, and make, the offer a ground of appeal to the benevolent. As regards the children, the medical officer declares that his medicines are useless, and even dangerous. They are taken in the morning, the child is exposed in the evening, and in a few months it dies —*a natural death*? Here is lower depth of crime and misery which baffles the benevolent and wise.[5]

The aged, the infirm, the sufferers from chronic disease, the permanently disabled, the several classes of widows, the single women who have one or more children, and those who are chargeable mainly from temporary illness, have been collected and separated from the dense mass of pauperism. Who are those that remain? There is much error abroad upon this question. They are legion, whether they be regarded in connexion with the causes which have led to their impoverishment, or with reference to their various modes of obtaining a livelihood. Reference has already been made to that portion of the population of England who are in a transition state —*i. e.* those whose ordinary employment has been superseded by more rapid and cheaper methods, and who have thereby lost their ordinary means of livelihood, and been drifted down from stage to stage until they have reached the lowest depth, and have at last been compelled to ask for a morsel of bread at the workhouse door. Then it will appear upon inquiry that each separate locality will present its peculiar species of casual poor, who fall into a state of destitution from the action of peculiar causes. It frequently happens that the individuals were never trained to any ordinary species of labour. At an early period of their lives, they were put in the way to learn a trade, but from early habits of idleness, from the criminal neglect of masters or parents, from natural incapacity for the particular trade, or from an unconquerable dislike to it, they have never been able to earn “salt to their porridge,” as the saying is. They never received a regular or an average amount of wage. If they are tailors, they compete with old women in making “slopwork” for the lower class of salesmen. Or they convert old coat tails into decent cloth caps, and may be industrious enough to supply a tribe of women with a Saturday night’s stock. As cobblers, they ply the craft of “translation” – a trade, even in this lower acceptation of the term, peculiarly liable to abuse. To the unlearned, it may be necessary to state that translation is the act of converting old boots into new ones, and is done with thin strips of varnished leather, and plenty of wax and large nails. There are carpenters, whose ingenuity is confined to the manufacture of money-boxes, cigar-cases, and children’s stools. Smiths, male and female, forge garden rakes, small pokers, and gridirons, as the season may suggest. And then their wives and children, or other men’s wives and children, hawk them for sale in populous neighbourhoods on market evenings. Tin funnels are sold “at the low price of a halfpenny.” Minute and useless candlesticks, wire forks, children’s toys, and old umbrellas, are a few specimens of this miscellaneous merchandise, the sale of which brings bread to hundreds of families. They live in fœtid alleys, are not cleanly, and are sometimes intemperate; hence they are peculiarly liable to the attacks of disease. During illness, there are many things which the sick man craves which a parochial officer cannot grant, and which a medical man could neither recommend

[5] If the reader will refer again to the form of “Relief List,” he will perceive that there are three general divisions, named severally, ordinary, medical, and casual. These terms were preserved, because they are well known in actual practice, rather than because they express a really broad distinction. The ordinary relief list is supposed to contain all those recipients of relief who are likely to continue chargeable for a long period. But the distinction attempted to be drawn between those who may require relief for a long and those who require it for a short period only, depends upon circumstances too vague and variable to be of any practical utility. These objections are not applicable to the generic term “medical.”

nor allow. The desire is gratified by the sale of a useful and indispensable tool; and thus, by degrees, he exits off his own means of subsistence. Then, like manufacturers of a higher grade, he may mistake the public wants, and the articles he has made may remain unsaleable on his hands, or he may fall into the error of over-production like a Manchester house. Then, in seasons when those commodities which constitute the common diet of the poor are scarce and dear, the persons who deal in them who are unable to buy, or uncertain to sell, are thrown back upon the few shillings which compose their capital. In large cities and towns, and in the neighbourhood of great markets, there are crowds of poor persons who gain their livelihood by the purchase and sale of the articles of daily food, and their combined purchases form a large item in the business of those markets. The costermongers, or costardmongers, consist of various grades. That brisk-looking man, who is riding so proudly in his donkey-cart, with his wife at his elbow, may be a very mean person in the estimation of the passer-by, but, in his world, he is a man of importance. He watches the "turns of the market," and being either in the possession of capital himself, or in a position to command it, he is able to compete with large dealers. He is a money-lender; and, if security be left with him – a poor woman's marriage certificate, or her wedding-ring is sufficient – he will enable her to buy her "little lot." Through him many are able to procure a stock at a trifling expenditure, who otherwise would be unable to buy in sufficient quantities to satisfy the original salesman. This class has its peculiar casualties, and in consequence become chargeable to parishes. Their habits may be irregular and intemperate. Or a poor woman may have expended her last farthing in the purchase of a tempting basket of fish. Her child falls ill, or she herself is unable, from the same cause, or from an accidental injury, to stand the necessary number of hours in the drenching rain; and so her stock is spoiled, and she suffers a greater calamity in her sphere than the brewer whose consignment of ale has turned sour on an India voyage.

In the vicinity of cathedrals and abbeys, in districts where dowagers and elderly maiden ladies most do congregate, and in there is always to be found a great number of kindly-disposed people, who have wherewithal to make life flow smoothly, leisure to listen to tales of wo, and the ability and inclination liberally to relieve. Now wherever these benevolent persons may be located, there will a troop of jackals herd, and run them down. Wherever public or private charities exist, there do these persons thrive. Their organisation, the degree to which they endure occasional privations and exposure, the recklessness with which they endanger the health and lives of those connected with them, is so passing strange, and, if fully expatiated upon, would be a chapter in the history of man and society, so disgusting, as to be unfit and morally unsafe to publish. Among the beings who infest these neighbourhoods, are men and women of keen wit – too keen, in truth – who have been well educated. Clerks who have been discharged for peculation. Women who, from the turbulence of their passions, have descended from the position of governesses, and who possess talent and tact equal to any emergency. They can write petitions in the highest style of excellence, as regards composition and penmanship. And they can also write letters on dirty slips of paper, in such a manner as that the homely phrase and the supposed ignorance of the petitioner shall be correctly sustained. They know all the charitable people of the district. They know the species of distress each person is most likely to relieve, and the days and hours they are most likely to be seen. They are in a position to instruct the several members of the fraternity as to the habits and foibles of the "gentlefolks." One is open-handed, but apt to exact a large degree of humility, and must be approached with deference. Another, if applied to at the wrong time, may give liberally to rid himself of their importunities. Another is rough and noisy; but if the applicant can endure it – which these people can, but decent people cannot – a largess is certain. With one, clean linen, a well-starched front, or a neat cap-border, is a desideratum, because it is supposed to indicate that the wearers were once in a better sphere. Another will only relieve those who are clothed in well-patched rags, or "real misery;" and then the appearance must be that of squalid destitution.

"Those back-streets to peace so dear,"

It happened the other day that an individual, in the regular exercise of his duty, was engaged in making inquiries in one of these neighbourhoods. The cooped-up dwellings were situated in the centre of a mass of buildings, round which a carriage might roll in five minutes, and yet nothing would appear to excite suspicions that within the area of a few hundred yards, so much real distress, and so much deceit, vice, and crime were in existence. The visitor has left the crowded thoroughfare, and entered a narrow cutting which leads to the heart of the mass of houses. In former days the street was the abode of the wealthy. Many of these aristocratic dwellings are still standing. They large and high. The rooms were once magnificent. Their great size is still visible, notwithstanding the partitions which now divide them. The elaborate, quaint, and, in some instances, beautiful style of ornament on the ceilings, the massive mouldings, and richly carved chimney-pieces, satisfy the observer that, in former days, they were the abodes of wealth and luxury. They are now tottering with age: the other day, the interior of one of them fell inwards. These houses may be entered, one after another, without intrusion. To the uninitiated, the rooms present the appearance of an unoccupied hospital. All the rooms on the upper floors are entirely filled with beds. If they are entered at the close of a cold winter evening, the aspect is cold and desolate. If you pause on the landing, you may hear sounds of voices. The whole of the occupants of these rooms are congregated at the bottom of the building. You should not enter, for, at the sight of a stranger, they would instantly reassume their several characters. If you look through a chink in the partition, you will see an assemblage of men, women, and children, in whose aspect and mien – if you can read the biography of a human being by studying the lines on the countenance – you may read many a tale and strange eventful history, – illustrating the adage that “truth is stranger than fiction.” If the hour be midnight, and the season winter, the large hall will be lit up by a blazing fire. Around it are grouped men and women of all ages. Some are dressed as sailors. In a corner, some Malays are eating their mess alone. They pay their threepence, and are not disturbed: – they are supposed, with truth, to be unacquainted with the rules of English boxing, and to carry knives. Their white dresses and turbans, their dark but bright and expressive countenances, their jet-black hair, and strange language, give an air of romance to the scene. There are widows with children, traveling tinkers, and knife-grinders. All these are talking, laughing, shouting, singing, and crying in discordant chorus. There is no lack of good cheer; and it is but justice to add, that the less fortunate, providing they are “no sneaks,” are allowed a share. At the door, or busily employed among the guests, is mine host, and his female companion: – “old cadgers” both, but stalwart, and able to maintain the “respectability” of the house.

The visitor passes on, and turns down a lane. By day or night, it hath an ancient and a fish-like smell. Apparently the dwellings are inhabited by the very poor. In the day time there are no noises, except that of women bawling to their children, who are sitting in the middle of the causeway, making dikes of vegetable mud and soap-suds. There are no sewers; – the commissioners have no power to make them, – and do not ask for it. There is nothing outwardly to indicate that the inhabitants are other than honest. If you open the doors, you may perceive that the staircases are double and barricaded, that rooms communicate with each other, and that, in the rear, there are facilities for hiding or escape. If you stroll about this place at night, you may be surprised by the sight of two policemen patrolling together. You will be an object of scrutiny and suspicion, – notwithstanding your respectable appearance. And then, as you appear to have no business in the neighbourhood, you will be civilly greeted with, “You are entering a dangerous neighbourhood, sir!” In the newspapers of the following day, you may read of a gang of housebreakers, or coiners, having been secured in this spot. And if it be revisited when a group of felons have just left the wharf, you will find it a scene of drunken lamentation.

In this lane is a *cul-de-sac*. It is inhabited by persons with respect to whose actual condition the shrewdest investigator is at fault. The visitor enters a dwelling, and climbs the narrow staircase. Upon entering the small room, he is almost stifled by the fœtid smells. In one corner, on a mattress, lies a man, whose gaunt arms, wasted frame, milky eye-balls, and dry cough, sufficiently indicate

the havoc which disease is doing at the seat of life. A fire has been recently kindled by the hand of charity. Near it, and seated upon a tub, is a woman, busily employed in toasting a slice of ham, which is conveyed rapidly out of sight upon hearing the ascending footsteps. Her dress is gay, but soiled, and her face is familiar to the pedestrian. Upon the entrance of the visitor, the Bible is hastily seized, and an attitude of devotion assumed. The question the visitor asks, is, Are you married? "Oh yes, I was married at a village near Bury, in Suffolk; I was travelling as a mountebank at the time." The tale is not well told. After a few interrogatories, and the utterance of a score of lies, the truth appears, – he was never in the county of Suffolk in his life. In a few days he makes a merit of his confession, and marries, – a week before his death.

Within a few yards, another scene is presented. This is a case of a man, his wife, and his large family. The visitor is shown into a miserable apartment, destitute of furniture; and, upon some loose shavings in a corner, a child has been left to cry itself to sleep. The case is relieved as one of great suffering. Relief flows freely. The wife appears ill; and the medical man is much puzzled by her account of the symptoms. Apparently she has been intemperate; but, according to the symptoms, it should be something between rheumatism and tic-doloreux. By-and-by a quarrel ensues, about the division of the spoil. An anonymous letter is received, declaring that the party has several residences, – that the room in which such a scene of destitution was presented, was not their ordinary place of habitation, – that they are in the receipt of fixed charities, names being given, and concluding with the allegation, subsequently verified, that their weekly receipts exceeded a mechanic's highest wage. The bubble bursts, and the family migrates.

It is hardly necessary to remark, that this order of applicants require strict attention on the part of the parochial officers. It is of importance to ascertain whether the several applicants really do any work, – whether they cannot get it, or are likely to be disconcerted at the offer of it. If they belong to the orders last described, the fact of visitation from an officer, with a note-book in his hand, would, of itself, be a disagreeable circumstance, not to be endured unless necessity compelled. It is frequently a matter of difficulty to collect the facts; and appearances are very deceitful. Idleness assumes the garb and language of industry. Idleness can take the part of industry, and perform it with technical accuracy; and it will be rendered more interesting than the original. When an industrious man falls into misfortune, he is more disposed to conceal, than to expose it ostentatiously. His language is often abrupt and rude: betraying a conflict with his own feelings of independence and pride. This a judicious and accustomed eye can discern. But it must not be forgotten that the relieving officer's inquiries have no legitimate reference to features, or doubtful signs, but to places and facts. These facts being added together, as they are collected from time to time, in the appropriate page in the report book, the board of guardians would have no difficulty in estimating the real character and circumstances of these applicants.

With the further consideration of the casual poor, the subject of *Out-door employment* may be usefully connected. We may state at once as our opinion, that any scheme which proposes to test destitution by offering the workhouse with its terrors, on the one hand, or which offers out-door employment *indiscriminately* to the able-bodied on the other, is detrimental to the interests of society. It is admitted that the offer of work to the well-disposed independent labourer may scare him away; he will consume his savings, sell his furniture, and break his constitution, rather than accept the relief on the terms offered. And some may be content with this. They may rejoice at the sight of the shillings saved. But it will soon be found, that when work has been offered indiscriminately, and after the lapse of time, that a large and yearly increasing number of labourers of various classes will accept the relief and do the work. This fact indicates with accuracy that the moral feelings of the labouring population are in process of deterioration. Then how unjust it is! Here is a stout, broad-shouldered, hard-handed, weather-tanned railway navigator, who would perform the hardest task with the greatest case and indifference; but it is a very different matter to the sedentary Liliputian workman of a manufacturing town. We can understand why the smooth-fingered silk-weavers of Spitalfields complained of being

set to break stones. It is still presumed that the great object is to diminish pauperism. It is not a question of this day or this year, or of a parish or union; but of the age and nation. This being so, we have to ascertain which of two modes is the preferable one: should labour be offered to all comers, or should the right to make the performance of labour a condition of receiving relief, be reserved as a right, and used with caution and discrimination? Let us inquire. Among the higher classes of society, the gradations of rank are distinctly marked. Among the middle classes, the gradations and varieties of social position are more numerous, less distinctly marked, and therefore fenced round with a world of form and ceremony. And as we descend, and enter the lower ranks, and approach the lowest, the distinctions and grades multiply. To the common observer, these distinctions may be unworthy of regard; but to the parties themselves, they are of importance. The higher grades among the poor have attained their position by the exercise of tact and talent, and by hard labour. Not that the accident of birth, or the position of the parents, are circumstances destitute of force – the son often follows the employment of the father, and the eldest son in many trades is permitted to do so, without the sacrifice of expense and time involved in an apprenticeship. There is a broad line of demarcation drawn between the skilled and unskilled trades. There are lines, equally as distinct, drawn between skilled trades, which correspond with the ancient guilds of cities. And in the present day, when the several ancient trades are so minutely divided, and subdivided, there are grades of workmen corresponding. Reference is not made to those distinctions which are recognised by the masters, but to those especially which obtain among the men themselves; for it is with their feelings we have to do. Now, these distinctions do not involve questions of difference and separation merely, but those also of resemblance and unity. Each “tradesman”[6] stands by his order; and that not only to preserve its dignity and privileges inviolate, but to render mutual aid. Many vanities may be associated with this, and many mummeries may be enacted, at which many who believe themselves wise may fancy they blush; but the mechanic is only guarding in an imperfect manner an ancient institution. It is when we look at labour from this point of view, that we begin to conceive how it happens that so few regular labourers, in proportion to the mass, become chargeable to parishes; and this, notwithstanding the vicissitudes of their several employments. This inwardly sustaining power, of which the world in general is ignorant, is worthy of study. The intensity varies as we descend. In a populous parish, there are many who, from the action of a thousand disturbing influences, drop from the ranks. Now, is it not obvious, that to offer, with the eyes of the understanding and judgment firmly closed, to each able-bodied applicant a degrading employment, must drag him to its level? In most cases the feeling of repugnance on the part of the head of the family against applying for relief in person – a rule in all parishes – is so intense, as to require the fact of his family being in a state bordering on starvation, to weaken it. If he is required to do labour for the relief proffered, in a place where he is known, and among an order of workmen who are pauperised and below him, who would welcome him with sneers and derision, the chances are that he will not accept the relief on the terms offered. Is pauperism checked thereby? Wait and see. It is likely he will not remain in a place where all his cherished associations have been so rudely broken up. Home he has none. The four naked walls, the mattress on the floor, the single rug, his sickly and fretful children – and these regarded with a jaundiced eye, are not the objects and associations which make up the idea of home. He hears strange tales from trampers about an abundance of work in other places, and misguidedly he wanders, with or without his wife and children, in search of the imaginary spot. He travels from town to town, and subsists on the pittance which the trades allow, so long as he journeys to the south. His original feeling of independence has become weakened: its main prop has been removed. The apprehension of what the denizens of our little world may say, is frequently a powerful auxiliary to a steady and moral course of action. This houseless man, by leaving his native village, or his usual haunts in the crowded city, has deprived himself of this sustaining power; and he falls, morally and socially. Another, with

[6] A tradesman is not a shopkeeper, but a mechanic who is skilled in his particular branch of industry.

less strength of body, is subdued by his privations, and receives that relief as a sufferer from low fever or incipient consumption, which was withheld from him while in health. All this is natural, and it is true in point of fact. The inference is, that no able-bodied applicant should be set to work, until it formally and clearly appears from a statement of facts, in the relieving officer's report book, that he is idle or drunken. In the regular order of business, the man would be charged with the fault by the chairman, and should be allowed the benefit of any doubt. The applicant may say, "I worked last for A. B. at – , and I left with others when the job was finished." Let him have relief without labour, until the fact is ascertained. And as a page is opened to each case in the report book, the statement resulting from the inquiry is recorded, and is either for, or against him. If he pleads for another chance, give it him. Let the labour be regarded in all cases as a *dernier resort.*

What work should be given? This is mainly a local question: a few general remarks may, however, be made. Under the old system, the out-door work done by paupers, gradually assimilated with that performed by independent labourers, and at last became undistinguishable. It appears to have been a practice, if a man alleged that he was unable to support his family, to set him to work; and the parishioners were required to employ the labour. Now, the parishioners already employed as much labour as they required, and the individuals they preferred, and the necessity of employing the pauper labour, had the effect of reducing the wages of the independent labourer: he was either employed less, or paid less. Thus the labourer, who by his industry, and the exercise of temperance and frugality, had saved, and was therefore in a position to weather a long and dreary winter, by the influence of this baneful system, was reduced to the level of the idle and intemperate. This evil maybe averted. The old abuses were attributable to the fact, that the several parishes and hamlets were so small, and so poor, as to, render it impossible to adopt any system of management. The work given should be hard work, and preserved as distinct as possible from that performed by the independent labourer; and, in course of time, a wholesome feeling of aversion would grow up respecting it, similar to that which was entertained against the workhouse, before it became the compulsory residence of the casually unfortunate, as well as of those who had sunk morally and socially. The work given should be public work; or work which has a remote reference to a private good, but which no individual under ordinary circumstances would perform. For example, there is stone-breaking, and the general preparation of materials for the repair of the highway; the levelling of hills, and the raising of valleys; the clearing of main ditches; the draining of mosses; the dredging of rivers; the reclaiming of lands from the waste, or the sea; the collecting of certain manures; the raising of embankments to prevent the overflow of rivers; the cleansing of streets and the performance of certain kinds of labour for union-houses and other institutions supported at the public expense; and if the highway trusts should be consolidated, and placed under competent management, it is likely that some of the labour required might be performed by paupers.

The labour done must be tasked and estimated. This is indispensable. To allow an able-bodied man to lie upon his back, and bask in the mid-day sun, while he lazily picks up grass and weeds with his outstretched hands, and throws it in the air, may be considered as employment; but to call it labour is absurd. Pauper labour is proverbially unproductive, *i. e.* it costs nearly its value in superintendence. But, if it is resorted to, it must be watched with care, or its introduction will be injurious. Now, during the last few years, a class of men have arisen from the labouring class, who might be found qualified to superintend this labour. Railway enterprise has developed a certain order of skill which might be rendered available. It is well known that the several miles of railway are divided into a number of contracts, which are again divided, and taken by sub-contractors, and the sub-division proceeds until yards of work are taken by the men who engage or govern the lower class of labourers. A similar class of men is to be found on the banks of rivers, who are known as gangers. Then there are discharged sergeants and corporals, and even privates, who can produce their discharge with a favourable report upon character endorsed upon it. We know the severity of the army, in this particular. A discharge, with that portion of it cut off on which the endorsement favourable to the soldier's character should

have been, ought not to lead necessarily to the inference that his character has been bad in a civil point of view. But, if the endorsement exists, we may rest assured that he has been staid in his deportment, clean in his person, careful in the performance of his duty, and regular as regards time. The classes of sergeants and corporals have the additional advantage of being accustomed to order, as well as to obey. Discharged soldiers generally require an active employment, or they sink morally and socially. Men from this class might be selected with advantage.

But some may exclaim, what an expense! Possibly! It remains, however, to be seen whether the weight is not felt because the pressure is unequal. A guardian of an ancient parish and borough, in an agricultural district, observed the other day, "This new removal act is a serious matter to us, – as the cottars in the out-parishes die off, the cottages are pulled down, and this impoverished borough will have to support the children, because they reside here." Of course, while the inducement to such proceedings exists, and the poor are compelled to support the poor, every attempt at permanent improvement will meet with either active opposition or passive resistance. Then, again, it is said, that as the manufacturing system has created a weak and dangerous population, and one likely to be suddenly impoverished by the vicissitudes of the system, they should be compelled to relieve it when those adverse periods arrive. Does the rating of the manufacturer bear any proportion to his capital, the extent of his business, or his profits? His poor-rate receipt records an inappreciable item of expenditure. The pressure of the rate is not upon him, but upon the householders of the suburbs where the poor reside. It is not just that the manufacturer who owns a mill, or he who merely owns a warehouse, and employs out-door work-people – that the dealer in money, the discounter, the various large agencies, the merchant who transacts his business in a single office and sends his ship all over the world, and the great carriers, because their business happens not to be rateable according to the law, should bear no greater burden than the shop-keepers in a great London thoroughfare. It is likely that there would be a *temporary* increase of expenditure; but then justice would be done to the aged, the infirm, and the sick. In this respect the expenditure would increase; but as regards the able-bodied there would be a reduction, and in this way: If a man is thrown out of work, and his habits being known, he is relieved; he is thereby sustained, and when work begins to abound he starts fairly. If he is compelled to sink, the chances are he will never rise. Every guardian in the kingdom knows, from personal observation, how difficult it is to dispose of a family which has been forced into the union-house, and has lost a home. It is confidently expected, if out-door relief, accompanied by labour, be given only to those able-bodied applicants who are known, from the facts of their history as officially reported, to be idle, dissolute, and intemperate; – if the labour required to be done be public work; if it be apportioned and tasked by judiciously chosen task-masters, and given to each individual at a low rate of prices, lower than those of ordinary labour, and paid in food, or even in lodging when specially applied for and deemed necessary, – then, as regards the able-bodied applicants, the nearest approach will have been made to a perfect system. And if the system here sketched, or rather if the hints which have been dropped from time to time in the progress of this article, be collected and arranged, it is believed, that inasmuch as they have reference to the moral principles of our nature, as well as to the physical condition of the pauper, they will operate beneficially upon the poor of England. And if it should appear, from the statistics officially reported by a *minister* in the regular exercise of his duty in parliament, that the number of poor receiving relief who belong to the first three classes have slightly increased, that report should be considered as highly satisfactory, and not as a disclosure injurious to national honour. It is not a matter of which Englishmen ought to be ashamed, or a subject to be bewailed, that the aged, the infirm, and the sick among the very poor, are not allowed either to perish, or to have their cherished habits and associations destroyed. Then, as regards the class of widows, if it should appear that the numbers do not go on increasing in the ratio of deaths, but continue nearly stationary, the report would be still satisfactory; because the inference from it would be, that, as new cases have been added, old ones must have discontinued. And the report respecting the two great divisions of the able-bodied – those who are not set to do work, and those who are – would be pregnant

with information. And lastly, that part of the report which discloses the number of cases which have not been distributed in the several classes, would be of great value, as indicating the quarter where the inspectors under the orders of Government might most advantageously make their inquiries.

The classes and orders of poor that ordinarily become chargeable to parishes have been commented upon; and a few of the peculiar traits have been sketched of that motley group, which cannot be classified in any other way, than as persons who, from their admitted idleness, ought to be set to labour; or as persons to whom the exaction of labour in return for relief would be detrimental, – and not only detrimental to their personal interests, but to those of society. We have also stirred up and exposed the dregs of society: an operation neither pleasant nor useful under ordinary circumstances. But our inquiries have been pathological. And it is the duty of the physician or surgeon to probe the wound, and examine minutely the abscess, and then to institute inquiries equally minute and more general into the habits and constitution of the patient. Then the physician may have occasion to comment, in the lecture-room, upon this class of diseases; and he would then show how many circumstances must be considered and estimated before the true mode of treatment can be known. And as quacks thrive upon ignorance and credulity, he might gratify the curious student by an exposition upon the facility with which imaginary cures might be effected. He might show that by the employment of quack medicines the diseased part might be made to assume the appearance of health. The abscess can be closed; but the corruption, of which the open wound was only the outlet, will still circulate through the system, deteriorate the blood, and at last seriously derange the vital organs. The reader will apply these remedies in the proper quarter. And then, as in the consideration of the first series of classes we had occasion to dwell mainly upon those characteristics of the poor which attract regard and sympathy, it became necessary, in order that the general idea might be in accordance with the general bearing of the facts, to conduct the reader into strange scenes, and among classes of human beings, which might otherwise have been disregarded or unknown. The reader now sees distinctly that which the clamour and clash of rigourists and universal-benevolence-men might have led him to overlook, viz. —*that pauperism includes in its legions the most virtuous, the most vicious, the most industrious, and the most idle*; and refers to decent, honest poverty as well as to squalid destitution. We may conclude by averring, that the tendency of an extended system of out-door relief, administered in the manner, and according to the principles laid down, would be, to raise one class from the state of pauperism, – to confront distresses which the complexity of civilised society, and the extension of the manufacturing systems have occasioned, boldly, firmly, and humanely, – to distinguish between the honest industrious poor, and the lazy vagabond – to give one a fair chance of obtaining employment, and to remove inducements from the other to prowl about and live upon the public. And if this can be in any degree attained, it will so far stand out in bold contrast to the doctrines of *The Edinburgh Review*, and the practice of the Poor-Law Commissioners, which have reference only to the health of the animal fibre, and not to the soul which gives it life.

THE POACHER;

OR, JUTLAND A HUNDRED AND THIRTY YEARS SINCE

From the Danish

I. – THE DEER-RIDER

The Danish isles have such a pleasant, friendly, peaceful aspect, that, when carried by our imagination back to their origin, the idea of any violent shock of nature never enters into our thoughts. They seem neither to have been cast up by an earthquake, nor to have been formed by a flood, but rather to have gradually appeared from amid the subsiding ocean. Their plains are level and extensive, their hills few, small, and gently rounded. No steep precipices, no deep hollows remind one of the throes at Nature's birth; the woods do not hang in savage grandeur on cloud-capt ridges, but stretch themselves, like living fences, around the fruitful fields. The brooks do not rush down in foaming cataracts, through deep and dark clefts, but glide, still and clear, among sedge and underwood. When, from the delightful Fyen, we pass over to Jutland, we seem, at first, only to have crossed a river, and can hardly be convinced that we are on the continent, so closely resembling and near akin with the islands is the aspect of the peninsula. But the further we penetrate, the greater is the change in the appearance of the country. The valleys are deeper, the hills steeper; the woods appear older and more decayed; many a rush-grown marsh, many a spot of earth covered with stunted heath, huge stones on the ridgy lands – every thing, in short, bears testimony to inferior culture, and scantier population. Narrow roads with deep wheel-ruts, and a high rising in the middle, indicate less traffic and intercourse among the inhabitants, whose dwellings towards the west appear more and more miserable, lower and lower, as if they crouched before the west wind's violent assault. In proportion as the heaths appear more frequent and more extensive, the churches and villages are fewer and farther from each other. In the farm-yards, instead of wood, are to be seen stacks of turf; and instead of neat gardens, we find only kale-yards. Vast heath-covered marshes, neglected and turned to no account, tell us in intelligible language that there is a superabundance of them.

No boundaries, no rows of willows, mark the division of one man's land from another's. It appears as if all were still held in common. If, at length, we approach the hilly range of Jutland, vast flat heaths lie spread before us, at first literally strewn with barrows of the dead; but the number of which gradually decreases, so that it may reasonably be supposed that this tract had never, in former times, been cultivated. This high ridge of land, it is thought, and not improbably, was the part of the peninsula that first made its appearance, rising from the ocean and casting it on either side, where the waves, rolling down, washed up the hills and hollowed out the valleys. On the east side of this heath, appear, here, and there, some patches of stunted oaks, which may serve a compass to travellers, the tops of the trees being all bent towards the east. On the large heath-covered hills but little verdure is to be seen, – a solitary grass-plot, or a young asp, of which one asks, with surprise, how it came here? If a brook or river runs through the heath, no meadow, no bush indicates its presence: deep down between hollowed-out hills, it winds its lonely course, and with a speed as if it were hurrying out of the desert.

Across such a stream rode, one beautiful autumn-day, a young well-dressed man, towards a small field of rye, which the distant owner had manured by scraping off the surface, and burning it to ashes. He and his people were just in the act of reaping it, when the horseman approached them, and inquired the road to the manor-house of Ansbjerg. The farmer, having first requited his question with another, – to wit, where did the traveller come from? – told him what he knew already, that he had missed his way; and then calling a boy who was binding the sheaves, ordered him to set the stranger in the right road. Before, however, the boy could begin to put this order in execution, a sight presented itself which, for a moment, drew all the attention both of the traveller and the harvest people. From the nearest heath-covered hill there came directly towards them, at full speed, a deer with a man on his back. The latter, a tall stout figure, clad in brown from head to foot, sat jammed in between the antlers of the crown-deer, which had cast them back, as these animals are wont to do when running. This extraordinary rider had apparently lost his hat in his progress, as his long dark

hair flowed back from his head, like the mane of a horse in full gallop. His hand was in incessant motion, from his attempt to plunge a knife it held into the neck of the deer, but which the violent springs of the animal prevented him from hitting. When the deer-rider approached near enough to the astonished spectators, which was almost instantaneously, the farmer, at once recognising him, cried, “Hallo, Mads! where are you going to?”

“That you must ask the deer or the devil!” answered Mads; but before the answer could be completely uttered, he was already so far away, that the last words scarcely reached the ears of the inquirer. In a few seconds both man and deer vanished from the sight of the gazers.

“Who was that?” inquired the stranger, without turning his eyes from the direction in which the centaur had disappeared.

“It is a wild fellow called Mads Hansen, or Black Mads: he has a little hut on the other side of the brook. Times are hard with him: he has many children, I believe, and so he manages as he can. He comes sometimes on this side and takes a deer; but to-day it would seem that the deer had taken him: that is,” added he, thoughtfully, “if it really be a deer. God deliver us from all that is evil! but Mads is certainly a dare-devil fellow, though I know nothing but what is honourable and good of him. He shoots a head of deer now and then; but what matters that? there’s enough of them; far too many, indeed. There, you may see yourself how they have cropped the ears of my rye. But here have we Niels the game-keeper. Yes; you are tracking Black Mads. To-day he is better mounted than you are.”

While he was saying this, a hunter appeared in sight, coming towards them at a quick trot from the side where they had first seen the deer-rider. “Have you seen Black Mads?” cried he, before he came near them.

“We saw one, sure enough, riding on a deer, but can’t say whether he was black or white, or who it was; for he was away in such haste that we could hardly follow him with our eyes,” said the farmer.

“The fiend fetch him!” cried the huntsman, stopping his horse to let him take breath; “I saw him yonder in the Haverdal, where he was skulking about, watching after a deer. I placed myself behind a small rising, that I might not interrupt him. He fired, and a deer fell. Mads ran up, leaped across him to give him the death-blow, when the animal, on feeling the knife, rose suddenly up, squeezed Mads between his antlers – and hallo! I have got his gun, but would rather get himself.” With these words he put his horse into a trot, and hastened after the deer-stealer, with one gun before him on his saddle-bow, and another slung at his back.

The traveller, who was going in nearly the same direction, now set off with his guide, as fast as the latter could go at a jog-trot, after having thrown off his wooden shoes. They had proceeded little more than a mile, and had reached the summit of a hill, which sloped down towards a small river, when they got sight of the two riders. The first had arrived at the end of his fugitive course: the deer had fallen dead in the rivulet, at a spot where there was much shallow water. Its slayer, who had been standing across it, and struggling to free himself from its antlers, which had worked themselves into his clothes, had just finished his labour and sprung on land, when the huntsman, who at first had taken a wrong direction, came riding past our traveller with the rein in one hand and the gun in the other. At a few yards’ distance from the unlucky deer-rider he stopped his horse, and with the comforting words, “Now, dog! thou shalt die,” deliberately took aim at him. “Hold! hold!” cried the delinquent, “don’t be too hasty, Niels! you are not hunting now; we can talk matters to rights.”

“No more prating,” answered the exasperated keeper, “thou shalt perish in thy misdeeds!”

“Niels, Niels!” cried Mads, “here are witnesses; you have now got me safe enough, I cannot go from you; why not take me to the manor-house, and let the owner do as he likes with me, and you will get good drink-money into the bargain.”

At this moment the traveller rode up, and cried out to the keeper, “For heaven’s sake, friend, do not commit a crime, but hear what the man has to say.”

“The man is a great offender,” said the keeper, uncocking his gun, and laying it across the pommel of his saddle, “but as the strange gentleman intercedes for him, I will give him his life. But

thou art mad, Mads! for now thou wilt come to drive a barrow before thee[7] for the rest of thy life. If thou hadst let me shoot thee, all would now have been over." Thereupon he put his horse into a trot, and the traveller, who was also going to Ansbjerg, kept them company.

They proceeded a considerable way without uttering a word, except that the keeper, from time to time, broke silence with an abusive term, or an oath. At length the deer-stealer began a new conversation, to which Niels made no answer, but whistled a tune, at the same time taking from his pocket a tobacco-pouch and pipe. Having filled his pipe, he endeavoured to strike a light, but the tinder would not catch.

"Let me help you," said Mads, and without getting or waiting for an answer, struck fire in his own tinder, blew on it, and handed it to the keeper; but while the latter was in the act of taking it, he grasped the stock of the gun which lay across the pommel, dragged it with a powerful tug out of the strap, and sprang three steps backwards into the heather. All this was done with a rapidity beyond what could have been expected from the broad-shouldered, stout and somewhat elderly deer-stealer.

The poor gamekeeper, pale and trembling, roared with rage at his adversary, without the power of uttering a syllable.

"Light thy pipe," said Mads, "the tinder will else be all burned out; perhaps it is no good exchange thou hast made; this is certainly better, – "here he patted the gun, – "but thou shalt have it again when thou givest me my own back."

Niels instantly took the other from behind him, held it out to the deer-stealer with one hand, at the same time stretching forth the other to receive his own piece.

"Wait a moment," said Mads, "thou shalt first promise me – but it is no matter, it is not very likely you'd keep it – though should you now and then hear a pop in the heather, don't be so hasty, but think of to-day and of Mike Foxtail." Turning then towards the traveller, "Does your horse stand fire?" said he, "Fire away," exclaimed the latter. Mads held out the keeper's gun with one hand, like a pistol, and fired it off; thereupon he took the flint from the cock, and returned the piece to his adversary, saying, "There, take your pop-gun; at any rate it shall do no more harm just yet. Farewell, and thanks for to-day." With these words he slung his own piece over his shoulder, and went towards the spot where he had left the deer.

The keeper, whose tongue had hitherto been bound by a power like magic, now gave vent to his long-repressed indignation, in a volley of oaths and curses.

The traveller, whose sympathy had transferred itself from the escaped deer-stealer to the almost despairing game-keeper, endeavoured to comfort him as far as lay in his power. "You have in reality lost nothing," said he, "except the miserable satisfaction of rendering a man and all his family unhappy."

"Lost nothing!" exclaimed the huntsman, "you don't understand the matter. Lost nothing! The rascal has spoiled my good gun."

"Load it, and put in another flint," said the traveller.

"Pshaw!" answered Niels, "it will never more shoot hart or hare. It is bewitched, that I will swear; and if one remedy does not succeed – aha! there lies one licking the sunshine in the wheel-rut; he shall eat no young larks to-day." Saying this, he stopped his horse, hastily put a flint in his gun, loaded it, and dismounted. The stranger, who was uninitiated in the craft of venery, and equally ignorant of its terminology and magic, also stopped to see what his companion was about to perform; while the latter, leading his horse, walked a few steps forward, and with the barrel of his piece poked about something that lay in his way, which the stranger now perceived to be an adder.

"Will you get in?" said the keeper, all the while thrusting with his gun at the serpent. At length, having got its head into the barrel, he held his piece up, and shook it until the adder was completely

[7] In other words, that he will be condemned to slavery, and employed on the public works in wheeling a barrow.

in. He then fired it off with its extraordinary loading, of which not an atom was more to be seen, and said, “If that won’t do, there is no one but Mads or Mike Foxtail who can set it to rights.”

The traveller smiled a little incredulously, as well at the witchcraft as at the singular way of dissolving it; but having already become acquainted with one of the sorcerers just named, he felt desirous to know a little about the other, who bore so uncommon and significant a name. In answer to his inquiry, the keeper, at the same time reloading his piece, related what follows: – “Mikkel, or Mike Foxtail, as they call him, because he entices all the foxes to him that are in the country, is a ten times worse character than even Black Mads. He can make himself hard.[8] Neither lead nor silver buttons make the slightest impression on him. I and master found him one day down in the dell yonder, with a deer he had just shot, and was in the act of flaying. We rode on till within twenty paces of him before he perceived us. Was Mike afraid, think you? He just turned round, and looked at us, and went on flaying the deer. ‘Pepper his hide, Niels,’ said master, ‘I will be answerable.’ I aimed a charge of deer-shot point-blank at his broad back, but he no more minded it than if I had shot at him with an alder pop-gun. The fellow only turned his face towards us for a moment, and again went on flaying. Master himself then shot; that had some effect; it just grazed the skin of his head: and then only, having first wrapped something round it, he took up his little rifle that lay on the ground, turned towards us, and said, ‘Now, my turn is come, and if you do not see about taking yourselves away, I shall try to make a hole in one of you.’ Such for a chap is Mike Foxtail.”

[8] The belief in *hard men*, *i. e.* of men whose skins were impervious to a musket or pistol ball, was extremely prevalent during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. They could be killed only by a silver bullet. Fitzgerald, the notorious duellist and murderer, in the middle of the last century, was said to have been a hard man. – See *Thoms’ Anecdotes and Traditions*, printed for the Camden Society, p. 111.

II. – ANSBJERG

The two horsemen having reached Ansbjerg, entered the yard containing the outhouses, turned – the keeper leading the way – towards the stable, unsaddled their horses, and went thence through an alley of limes, which led to the court of the mansion. This consisted of three parts. The chief building on the left, two stories high, with a garret, gloried in the name of "tower" – apparently because it seems that no true manor-house ought to be without such an appurtenance, and people are, as we all know, very often contented with a name. The central building, which was tiled, and consisted only of one story, was appropriated to the numerous domestics, from the steward down to the lowest stable-boy. The right was the bailiff's dwelling. In a corner between the two stood the wooden horse, in those days as indispensable in a manor-house as the emblazoned shields over the principal entrance.

At the same instant that the gamekeeper opened the wicket leading into the court-yard of the mansion, a window was opened in the lowest story of the building occupied by the family, and a half-length figure appeared to view, which I consider it my duty to describe. The noble proprietor – for it was he whose portly person nearly filled the entire width of the large window – was clad in a dark green velvet vest, with a row of buttons reaching close up to the chin, large cuffs, and large buttons on the pockets; a coal-black peruke, with a single curl quite round it, completely concealed his hair. The portion of his dress that was to be seen consisted, therefore, of two simple pieces, but as his whole person will hereafter appear in sight, I will, to avoid repetition, proceed at once to describe the remainder. On the top of the peruke was a close-fitting green velvet cap with a deep projecting shade, nearly resembling those black caps which have been worn by priests even within the memory of man.[9] His lower man was protected by a pair of long wide boots with spurs; and a pair of black unutterables, of the kind still worn by a few old peasants, even in our own days, completed the visible part of his attire.

"Niels keeper!" cried the master. The party thus addressed, having shown his companion the door by which he was to enter, stepped, holding his little gray three-cornered hat in his hand, under the window, where the honourable and well-born proprietor gave audience to his domestics and the peasants on the estate, both in wet and dry weather. The keeper on these occasions had to conform to the same etiquette as all the others, though a less formal intercourse took place between master and man at the chase.

"Who was that?" began the former, giving a side-nod towards the corner where the stranger had entered.

"The new writing-lad, gracious sir," was the answer.

"Is that all! I thought it had been somebody. What have you got there?" This last inquiry was accompanied by a nod at the gamekeeper's pouch.

"An old cock and a pair of chickens, gracious sir!" (This "gracious sir," we shall in future generally omit, begging the reader to suppose it repeated at the end of every answer.)

"That's little for two days' hunting. Is there no deer to come?"

"Not this time," answered Niels sighing. "When poachers use deer to ride on, not one strays our way."

This speech naturally called for an explanation; but as the reader is already in possession of it, we will, while it is being given, turn our attention to what was passing behind this gracious personage's broad back.

Here stood, to wit, the young betrothed pair, Junker Kai and Fröken Mette.[10] The first, a handsome young man of about twenty-five, elegantly dressed and in the newest fashion of the time.

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[9] It must be borne in mind that the priests here alluded to are Danish.

[10] Junker (*pronounced* Yunker,) the title given to a son of noble family. Fröken (*dimin. of* Frue, *madam*, *lady*; Ger. Fräulein) is

To show with what weapons ladies' hearts were in those days attacked and won, I must attempt to impart some idea of his exterior, beginning with the feet, that I may go on rising in my description: these, then, were protected by very broad-toed short boots, the wide legs of which fell down in many folds about his ankles; under these he wore white silk stockings, which were drawn up about a hand's-breadth above the knees, and the tops of which were garnished with a row of the finest lace; next came a pair of tight black velvet breeches, a small part only of which appeared in sight, the greater portion being concealed by the spacious flap of a waistcoat also of black velvet. A crimson coat with a row of large covered buttons, short sleeves, scarcely reaching to the wrists, but with cuffs turned back to the elbows, and confined by a hook over the breast, completed his outward decorations. His hair was combed back perfectly smooth, and tied in a long stiff queue close up in his neck. I should merit, and get but few thanks from my fair readers, if I did not with the same accuracy describe the dress of the honourable young lady, which may be considered under three principal divisions: firstly, the sharp-pointed, high-heeled, silver-buckled shoes; secondly, the little red, gold-laced cap, which came down with a sharp peak over the forehead, and concealed all the turned up hair; and thirdly, the long-waisted, sky-blue flowered damask gown, the wide sleeves of which, hardly reaching to the elbows, left the shoulders and neck bare, and – what may seem singular – was not laced; but Fröken Mette's face was so strikingly beautiful, that, in looking at her, her dress might easily be forgotten.

These two comely personages stood there, as we have said, behind the old gentleman, hand in hand, and, as it seemed, engaged in a flirtation. The Junker from time to time protruded his pointed lips as if for a kiss, and the lady as often turned her face away, not exactly with displeasure, but with a roguish smile. The most singular thing was, that every time she bent her head aside, she peeped out into the court, where at the moment nothing was to be seen (for the gamekeeper stood too close under the window to be visible) but the wooden horse and the new writing-lad, who, the instant he entered the office, had placed himself at the open window. That this latter, notwithstanding the predicate "writing-lad," was a remarkably handsome youth, it may seem strange to say, for, in the first place, he had a large scar above his cheek, and, in the second, he was clad wholly and solely as a writing-lad. It is needless to stay my narrative in portraying the mother of Fröken Mette, the good Fru[11] Kirsten, who was sitting in another window, and, with a smile of satisfaction, observing the amorous play of the two young people. The good old lady could with the greater reason rejoice at this match, as, from the beginning, it was entirely her own work. She had, as her gracious spouse in his hunting dialect jocosely expressed it, among a whole herd of Junkers scented out the fattest, and stuck a ticket on his foot. As the young gentleman was an only son, the heir to Palstrup, as well as many other lordships, the match was soon settled between the parents, and then announced to their children. The bridegroom, who was just returned from Paris when Fru Kirsten, in her husband's phraseology, took him by the horn, was perfectly well inclined to the match, for which no thanks were due to him, as Fröken Mette was young, beautiful, an only child, and heiress to Ansbjerg, the deer, wild-boars, and pheasants of which were as good as those of Palstrup, while with respect to heath-fowl and ducks it was vastly superior. As to the bride, she was so completely under subjection to the will of her parents, that for the present we may leave it doubtful how far her own inclination was favourable to the Junker. We know, indeed, that the female heart usually prefers choosing for itself, and often rejects a suitor for no other reason than because he was chosen by the parents; though if Junker Kai had been first in the field we should not have been under any apprehension on his account.

When the keeper had recounted all his misfortunes, which he did not venture to conceal, as both the writing-lad and his guide, and probably also the deer-stealer himself, would have made it known, the harsh master, whose anger often bordered on frenzy, broke forth into the most hearty maledictions on the poacher, from which shower of unpropitious wishes a few drops fell on poor

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the corresponding title of a young lady of rank.

[11] *Madam*, applied strictly to ladies of rank only.

Niels, who, out of fear of his master, was obliged to swallow his own equally well-meant oaths. As soon as the first fury of the storm had subsided and given place to common sense, a plan was devised for immediate and ample vengeance; the daring culprit should be seized, and, as he could now be easily convicted of deer-stealing, should be transferred to the hands of justice, and thence, after all due formalities, to Bremerholm. The difficulty was to catch him, for if he got but the slightest hint of his danger, he would, it was reasonable to imagine, instantly take to flight, and leave his wife and children in the lurch. The lord of the manor, who had been severely wounded in so tender a part, was for setting forth without a moment's delay, as so much of the day was left, that before the appearance of night they might reach the hut of Black Mads. But the gracious lady, in whose revenge a surer plan and maturer consideration were always manifest, represented to her impetuous mate, that the darkness would also favour the culprit's flight; or, if this were prevented, a desperate defence; it would therefore be better to march out a little after midnight, so that the whole armed force might invest and take the hut at break of day. This proposition was unanimously approved, and the Junker was invited to share in the peril and glory of the undertaking. The bailiff (who had just entered to announce the arrival of the new writing-lad, and to show a letter of recommendation brought by him from the bailiff at Vestervig) received orders to hold himself in readiness, together with the gardener, the steward, and the stable-boys, and also to order a peasant-cart to follow the march.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.