

**UNSKILLED LABOUR IN DUBLIN.**

## ITS HOUSING AND LIVING CONDITIONS.

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Perhaps the greatest difficulty in the way of the social reformer is his lack of adequate information. He perceives, as all, who are not blind or deaf, must perceive, that all is not well with the commonwealth, that large numbers of the population live starved and stunted lives, that, despite our triumphs in science, our increased power to control the forces of nature, this old world still contains a greater amount of human suffering and squalor than seems consistent with the general development of the twentieth century. The *Lusitania* and the slum, the aeroplane and the tenement house, the boy scout and the street arab, contrasts such as these are to be met with on every side. Glaring social evils stare us in the face, yet the problems connected with them must be approached very warily, lest the effort to do good may bring about a greater harm. If we are to play the surgeon, we must study the anatomy of the body politic. The paper to be read this evening will illustrate a phase of life in the city of Dublin, the life of the class generally described as unskilled labour.

It is an extraordinarily numerous body. In fact it may be stated that at least a quarter of the adult male population of Dublin earn their subsistence by unskilled manual labour. The city is one of great commerce, but few manufactures. It is the chief port of entry for the great cross-channel trade between England and Ireland. It contains the termini of four great railways and possesses many large shops and business establishments. It is the receiving and distributing centre for the greater part of Ireland. The labour required in its docks, stations, and warehouses is largely of an unskilled or semi-skilled character—porters, labourers, carters, messengers, and the like. There are about 90,000 adult males in the city of Dublin, and of these

17,223 are described in the Census of 1911 as "general labourers," 3,081 as "carters, draymen, etc.," 4,604 as "messengers, porters, etc." Adding these figures together it becomes evident that 24,000 men, more than a quarter of the adult male population, are engaged in unskilled labour. It may, therefore, be seen how large a part this form of employment plays in our civic economy.

As regards wages, naturally, unskilled labour occupies an unfavourable position. The occupation requiring no preliminary training or experience, little more, in fact, than physical strength and fitness, the supply of hands at any time is usually considerably in excess of the demand. The ranks of unskilled labour are recruited not only from the families of the older labourers, who, in many cases, bring up their sons to follow their own occupation, but also from the flotsam and jetsam of other walks in life. For instance, the countryman, who drifts into the city, finding his agricultural knowledge useless, generally turns to unskilled labour. Skilled workmen, too, when on the downward grade and unable to obtain work in their particular trades, are often forced by sheer starvation to adopt the same course. These two influences, the excess of supply and absence of education or training, act together in depressing the wages of unskilled labour. In Dublin the average wage paid is about 18/- a week, and even so low a figure as 15/- or 16/- has been recorded. Where wages are apparently higher than this 18/- figure, it will usually be found that some new factor has entered into the problem, for instance, the question of trust or responsibility, or again irregularity of employment due to various causes. Thus builder's labourers are paid 20/10 per week, but in bad weather they suffer continually from "broken time," which reduces their wages, on the average, to a figure rather below than above the 18/- level. On the whole, it seems fair to take 18/- as the usual remuneration, and to describe the conditions as they exist on that basis, remembering always that the description must be taken as applying to at least a quarter of our total population.

We must begin the study by assuming that marriage is the normal state of man, and that, once youth is passed, celibacy will be the exception rather than the rule. It would immensely simplify social problems if we could, like the ants and the bees, evolve a class of sexless celibate workers, but, human nature being what it is, we must take into account the probable existence, in the majority of cases, of a wife and children to be supported out of the 18/- a week. Nor is it usually found that members of the labouring classes defer their marriages from prudential considerations, as is so often the practice in other ranks of

life. They marry young, often before they are well into the twenties, and are usually very prolific. The girl of the working-class districts in the centre of Dublin is the mother of a household at an age when the girl of the suburbs is engaged in nothing more serious than tennis or term examinations. Excluding from our consideration the single men, who are not a very numerous body in this walk of life, we may devote our attention to the family life of the Dublin unskilled labourer receiving an average weekly wage of 18/-.

In the first place it will be seen that not much can be set aside from the domestic budget for the item of housing expenses. The receiver of 18/- a week cannot afford to pay more than 2/6 to 3/- a week for the rent of his dwelling. Now the plain fact of the matter is that decent accommodation fit for the inhabitation of a family cannot be commercially supplied for this figure. Architects have bent their best powers to the task of devising a cheap but healthy house for the working class, but so far, I believe, it has not been found possible to erect a dwelling of this kind for less than £150, and if the builder is to be recouped for his outlay, he cannot accept so low a rent as 3/-, which would no more than pay interest on the prime cost, leaving no allowance for rates, repairs, insurance, bad debts, etc. The labouring man, therefore, in Dublin is driven to adopt the same policy with housing as with other necessities of life, the adaptation to his own use of the second-hand possessions discarded by his richer fellow-citizens. The great mansions of the eighteenth century aristocracy, forsaken by the class which designed them, have been occupied in quite a different manner by quite a different class of people. Instead of one family occupying a ten-roomed house, there is a family *in every room*, each paying from 2/- to 3/- a week for its accommodation. By the kindness of the Housing and Town Planning Association of Ireland, which is conducting a detailed inquiry into the housing conditions of Dublin city, I have been permitted to exhibit on subsequent pages typical specimens of the conditions found by their inquirers:—



TYPICAL DUBLIN TENEMENT HOUSES.

*(The two houses shown above are described in detail on pp. 164-167.)*

## HOUSE

No. of case.	Situation of room.	Number of rooms held by family.	Number of family (resident members only, including lodgers).	Occupation of head of family.
25	Two-pair front.	1	3 (2 adults, 1 child)	Sailor ...
26	Two-pair back.	1	4 ... ..	Mother a shirt-maker.
27	Front drawing-room.	1	7 (2 adults, 5 children).	Labourer or van-man (on strike, also broken arm).
28	Back drawing-room.	1	2 (husband and wife).	Tram yardman ...
29	Front parlour.	1	3 (widow, daughter and another child)	Charwoman ...
30	Back parlour.	1	4 (2 adults, 2 children).	Labourer ...
31	Front kitchen.	1	4 (2 adults, 2 children).	Labourer on strike).

Ten rooms in house (back kitchen vacant, no information received seem poorer than those in Nos. 5 or 6. The house generally was in a out of order and was being repaired. The drain which ran from it under badly. Four people were living in the kitchen at the time, and I saw information is incomplete.

Rooms investigated, 7.  
Families resident, 7.

## No. 7 (left-hand house in illustration).

Occupation of any other working (resident) member of family.	Total weekly earnings of family.	Rent per week.	Remarks (presence of sickness, state of room, &c.)
—	—	s. d. 3 0	Clean and tidy.
—	—	2 6	Tenant out.
—	16s. when in work.	3 0	These were most respectable people, and their room was well furnished. Children at school. 11 years in room.
—	18s. 8d. in full wage, but not regular.	2 6	These people seemed strangely out of place in such a house.
Young girl learning tailoring, 5s. a week.	12s.	3 0	Untidy room, but nice woman.
—	16s.	2 6	—
2 girls at Jacob's biscuit factory.	Man, 16s ; Girls' earnings not known.	2 0	This kitchen was dark and smelt very badly.

for front and back attic). People in the house, with two exceptions, worse condition, though not tumble-down. Yard clean, but lavatory was the kitchen floor was open, and the whole of the lower story smelt food on the table. The people of the attic did not reply to knocks, so

Inhabitants recorded, 27.

Total weekly rental, 18s. 6d

## HOUSE

No. of Case.	Situation of room.	Number of rooms held by family.	Number of family (resident members only, including lodgers).	Occupation of head of family.
32	Top front	1	3 (no lodgers) ...	Charwoman ...
33	Top back	1	4 ...	Labourer (out of work owing to strike).
34	Two-pair front	1	4 (widow, son, 2 daughters).	Casual work when able to get it.
35	Two-pair back	1	3 ...	Works in Barrington's soap factory.
36	Front drawingroom.	1	6 (one lodger) ...	Charwoman ...
37	Back drawingroom.	1	3 ...	Labourer (locked out).
38	Front and back parlours.	2	6 (no lodgers) ..	Electrician ...
39	Front kitchen	1	6 ...	Labourer ...

10 rooms in house (back kitchen vacant). In every case accommodation inadequate for number in house, sole water tap being in yard, only one Rooms investigated, 9. Families resident, 8.

## No. 8 (right-hand house in illustration).

Occupation of any other working (resident) members of family.	Total weekly earnings of family.	Rent per week.	Remarks (presence of sickness, state of room, &c.).
—	6s. to 7s. ...	s. d. 2 0	Occupier out, hence information scanty. Walls and ceiling in good order.
—	16s. to 19s. when working.	1 9	Papers and ceiling in good order. Information scanty, as the mother was out.
Son, bookbinding apprentice. One girl in Jacob's, 7s. to 11s. a week (now 2s. 6d. strike pay). Other girl, laundry, 4s.	11s. to 15s.	3 0	Walls and ceiling in good order.
"The girl, 1s. 6d."	Man, 22s. to 28s. per week	2 0	Walls and ceiling in good order. Room very clean, but poorly furnished. Man drinks.
—	8s. to 11s. ...	3 0	Walls and ceiling in good order. Room clean and well furnished.
—	16s. to 19s.	2 0	Walls and ceiling in good order. Room clean, but very poorly furnished. Everything pawned. Decent man.
—	30s. to 40s.	5 0	Walls and ceiling in good order. Well and completely furnished.
Mother "charing"	—	2 6	Not admitted; further information refused by daughter acting on mother's orders.

not in proportion to rent, while water and sanitary arrangement quite lavatory. Yard very well kept, stairs rather dirty.

Inhabitants recorded, 35.

Total weekly rental, 21s. 3d.



Of the 15 families resident in these two "tenement houses," it will be noticed that 11 belong to the unskilled labour class. The average rent paid is rather over 2/6 a week. Such are the housing conditions of the great majority of the labouring classes of Dublin. Where they do not inhabit the old mansion cut up into one-room tenements, as shown above, they will probably be found living under even worse conditions in airless courts and alleys or in the tumble-down death-traps of the Church Street district and the Liberties (for illustrations see the terrible photographs appended to the report of the recent Committee of Inquiry). But the large tenement house may be taken as characteristic. Now, families living under such conditions as these are manifestly overcrowded and, as a result of such overcrowding, have to make continual sacrifices of comfort, decency, and health. Moral and physical contagion are ever present. Perhaps one or two illustrations from personal experience will be permitted. One is of a "front drawingroom" on a sultry day in August. A child lay ill with whooping-cough and was lying exhausted on the bed after a paroxysm of coughing. Flies were numerous in the room (it was a hot summer) and were passing and repassing from the food on the table to the face and body of the sick child. Another is of an indignant father who appealed to me, as one in temporary authority, to procure the ejection of a suspected "unfortunate" from the room above his own. He said he was trying to "bring up his childer dacint," and how could he do it with women like that in the house. Again, to consider merely physical conditions, how is absolute cleanliness possible, even with the best intentions, when some thirty or more people of both sexes and all ages and belonging to different families have to share the same water supply and the same sanitary accommodation, both on the ground floor of a four or five story house? Is there not a temptation to be dirty, when cleanliness involves the descent and ascent of perhaps eight flights of stairs and the carrying of heavy cans of water? Even the cleanest of us is not willing to clean up other people's dirt, and so the common hall and staircase become exceedingly foul, while the state of the common yard frequently beggars description. The sanitary officers do their duty, no doubt, but they cannot go into every house every day, and so evils often go for a long while undetected and unchecked. Again just consider such overcrowding as is shown in Case No. 27, seven people in one room, eating, sleeping, cooking, being born, as like as not dying, all within the compass of the same set of walls. Dirt fosters disease, overcrowding leads directly to tuberculosis, to infantile mortality and

many other evils. Can it be wondered then, considering that at least a quarter of our population live in dwellings of the type illustrated, that of all the cities of the United Kingdom, Dublin, year after year, has the highest average death-rate.

So much then for environment, that potent factor which particularly affects the young. Next arises the question of maintenance. What is the usual dietary of a family depending on the wages of unskilled labour? The recent researches of social inquirers supply us with a ready answer to the question. The labouring family, in a word, subsists chiefly on bread and tea. There are three meals in the day—breakfast, dinner, and tea (or supper). For the first and last meal tea and bread (with or without butter, dripping, or margarine, according to the state of the family finances) are the almost invariable bill of fare. Dinner shows greater variety, and is usually the only meal in which flesh food appears on the table. Meat, like butter, disappears from the dietary under financial stress, though even in the worst times an effort is made to give the breadwinner a sustaining meal in the middle of the day, even if wife and children can only have bread and tea. The dinner will sometimes consist of American bacon boiled with cabbage, or of fried herrings, or the cheaper parts of foreign meat, accompanied by boiled potatoes. Seldom are any other vegetables than potatoes, cabbage, and onions to be seen on the table. There is little scope for housewifely contrivance in the planning of the meals, which succeed one another for the most part with wearisome iteration. This is partly due to the fact that the grate of the tenement room is almost always of the "open" type familiar in sittingrooms or bedrooms of a better class house. Consequently it contains no oven; baking is impossible, and boiling and frying are the only culinary operations that can be performed. Thus the housekeeper is limited by the nature of her equipment. Porridge is little used; puddings and fruit, the joys of childhood, are almost unknown. Hence the daily fare of the labouring classes is characterised by extreme monotony, and this circumstance alone goes far to account for the drinking habits of some of our people. A squalid environment and poor nourishment depress the individual so much that he or she seeks the excitement and momentary cheerfulness that is provided so lavishly at every corner.

The chief criticism, indeed, that medical men pass on the dietary outlined above is that, even under the most favourable circumstances, it is only just sufficient for the maintenance of life and that it does not make for stamina or sturdiness of constitution. It is lacking in variety and provides no margin for emergencies. Those who live on such

a diet as this and in such homes as most of the Dublin labouring population inhabit, are certain to be a sickly class. Hale old age is seldom met with and infantile mortality is higher than it should be, seeing that it is the universal custom to bring up infants on the breast. Indeed the effects of inadequate nourishment and unwholesome surroundings are nowhere more noticeable than in the appearance of the poor children of all ages in our city.

Having dealt with housing and dietary, we may now proceed to other necessary or desirable features of human life. However, it must be premised that the labouring household must as a rule content itself with the provision of the barest necessities. Indeed, when the rent has been paid and the four or five hungry mouths fed for the week, there is little over to provide clothes, furniture, fuel and the like. The way of spending the money varies, of course, with different individuals, but a typical budget would perhaps be as follows:—

	s.	d.
Rent, . . . . .	2	6
Fuel and Light, . . . . .	2	0
Bread, . . . . .	4	0
Tea, . . . . .	0	9
Sugar, . . . . .	0	8
Milk (usually condensed), . . . . .	0	6
Butter (dripping, margarine), . . . . .	1	6
Potatoes or other vegetables, . . . . .	1	0
Meat, Fish, Bacon, etc., . . . . .	2	0
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Total, . . . . .	14	11
Balance, . . . . .	3	1
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Wages for week, . . . . .	18	0

By the kindness of Rev. R. M. Gwynn, F.T.C.D., I have been enabled to check this budget by comparing it with those actually recorded in labouring households. It substantially agrees, except that at present prices the item of fuel and light would probably be considerably higher. As there are no facilities for storing fuel in the tenement room, even supposing that the labourer could spare the money to purchase in quantity, coal has to be bought in small amounts, the bag of  $1\frac{1}{4}$  cwt., or even the stone of 14 lbs. The place of deposit for coal, oil, etc., is usually under the bed.

It will be seen from the typical budget quoted that there is only a balance of three shillings and one penny for provision or renewal of clothes, furniture, insurance, amusements, etc. It is a standing wonder that this scanty and

precarious balance can be made to provide for the innumerable small needs of a household. Clothes are a continually recurring item, and the usual practice is that already mentioned in connection with housing, the adaptation to the labouring class of the discarded possessions of the well-to-do. Husband and wife probably wear secondhand clothes purchased in Little Mary Street or elsewhere for a few shillings. The children go hatless and barefoot, and are frequently dressed in the worn-out clothes of their parents, rudely cut down to fit, thus producing that characteristic Dublin figure, the street child with its tousled head, its bare legs and the quaintly fluttering rags of its wardrobe.

Furniture, too, is usually bought secondhand and is confined to the barest necessities. Bedsteads, bedclothes, tables and chairs will be found in these households, but may be dispensed with at need. Boxes may be substituted for tables and chairs. If there is no bedstead or bedclothes the family may have to huddle in a corner and cover themselves with their united wardrobes. In some tenement rooms the bedstead is not to be seen in its usual place in the corner, but in its stead there is spread on the floor a mysterious and repellent assortment of rags, which few inquirers have had the hardihood to investigate and which is believed to serve as a bed. When hard times come, the furniture goes, and probably most of the clothes. Case No. 37 in the detailed account of typical tenement houses already given, shows a household thus depleted under stress of circumstance.

"Hard times" are unfortunately of frequent occurrence, and are usually caused by sickness or unemployment. Sickness, as has been said, is an inevitable result of the conditions of life, and periods of unemployment are characteristic of the life of the unskilled labourer. Quayside labour, for instance, which employs thousands in Dublin, is in its very nature, casual and irregular. Carting varies from time to time according as the volume of trade swells or diminishes. The Trades Unionism which has flourished hitherto among the labourers of Dublin is rather of the militant than the provident type, and little or no provision is made by the men themselves to guard against sickness or unemployment. If the breadwinner has to enter a hospital or is unable to get work, the wife goes out "charing," or obtains outdoor relief, or, more probably, assistance, from some charity or other. The clothes and furniture are pawned, the rent falls into arrears, and the financial equilibrium, always unstable, is completely disturbed. Furthermore, the evil effects of periods of destitution are not always removed when comparative prosperity is restored. Debts have been contracted, possessions which

have been sold or pawned must be replaced, and by the time all this has been done the wolf may be prowling around the door again. The housekeeper on 18/- a week is engaged in a never-ceasing hand-to-hand struggle with indigence. As a result she is obliged to have recourse habitually to measures which should only be a last desperate resort. Many households in this city have, as a regular feature of their weekly routine, an extensive pawning on Monday and redemption on Saturday. Needless to say, there is no room in the labouring family for the practice of any expensive vice by any of its members. Drunkenness or gambling on the part of husband or wife must mean privation for all.

From the continual financial stress, which turns the laughing girls of the poorer Dublin streets into the weary-eyed women of the tenement houses, no real relief comes until the children begin to grow up and contribute some part of their earnings to the family exchequer. By the time the boys and girls are fourteen or fifteen they are old enough to go out and earn a few shillings. Case No. 31 shows an instance of a labourer's wages being supplemented by the earnings of girls working at Jacob's biscuit factory. However, later on, when the boys and girls grow up and marry, the parents, now growing old, are thrown on their own resources and, though they have no one but themselves to clothe and feed, sometimes pass through a period of considerable penury before the Old Age Pension, "God's bounty," as some of the poor call it, descends on them at the age of 70. It must be remembered that an unskilled labourer at 50 or 60 is worth no more to his employer, but probably less, than at 20 or 30. Also, if by any chance he loses his employment when he is beginning to have the appearance of an old man, he is not likely to find another place easily.

Such, then, in some of its main outlines, is the life of a quarter of our city population, badly housed, ill fed, unhealthy, indigent, struggling, hopeless. The adjectives are not too strong, nor has the picture been painted in too gloomy colours. There are relieving features, no doubt, but their very presence heightens the general sombreness and squalor of the scene. The Dublin labouring class possesses several fine qualities. It is deeply religious, as is shown by many indications. It lives, as a rule, a much more moral and respectable life than could be expected considering its surroundings. It exhibits in a marked degree the social virtues of kindness, cheerfulness, and courtesy. The inquirers of the Housing and Town Planning Association, though they went into hundreds of dwellings during a great strike and asked a number of very

pointed and delicate questions, rarely encountered suspicion or incivility. Mentally and morally this class is probably on a higher level than the labouring classes of most cities. It is on the physical and economic sides that Dublin falls so far behind.

What, then, can be done to improve the position of the labourer and to rescue him from the Slough of Despond in which he lies? In the first place an increase of wages, or, at all events, a levelling up of wages to the figures now paid only by model employers, seems inevitable. Unless it is intended to enforce celibacy on the labouring population, the average weekly wage must be sufficient to support a family consisting of husband, wife, and children. Look at Cases No. 27 and 30, families of seven and four, each living on 16/- a week. It can only mean "starvation rations." The prisoners in the cells, the paupers in the workhouse, are better housed, fed and looked after than many of the honest and self-supporting poorer citizens of Dublin. I know economic objections will be raised to advocacy of increased wages. It will be said that if wages rise the price of commodities will rise proportionately, and the new wage will buy no more than the old. To this I would answer that the articles of the labouring man's consumption are not produced in Dublin, and therefore their prices, except so far as concerns cost of handling and delivery after arrival in the city, are not affected by variations in Dublin wages. The price of coal depends mainly on the circumstances prevailing in Great Britain, the price of bread, meat, butter, bacon, and potatoes on the agricultural condition of Ireland, Denmark, America, the Argentine, and other countries; and so through all the items of the budget already given.

The increase necessary to bring the remuneration of unskilled labour to a proper living wage need not and should not involve more than a trifling increase in the price of the commodity. For instance, take the extreme case of a coal carter, whose wages are increased from 16/- to 20/- a week, a rise of 4/-. A carter working 50 or 60 hours a week, probably delivers at least 35 tons of coal. Delivery, therefore, under the new rate will cost about 1¼d. per ton more than formerly. Of course, under such circumstances the Dublin coal merchants would, with singular unanimity, put up the price by one shilling per ton, if not two, and would try to make the public believe that the increased price was entirely due to the rise in wages. And even if our coal were to cost us the full shilling more, many of us would rather pay it than pay a shilling less and be troubled with the thought of the carter's miserable home and half-nourished children. If

the only solution of the problem is to pay more, in Heaven's name let us do so and be done with it. Cheapness is too dearly bought if it involves human suffering and degradation.

The same considerations really lie at the base of the housing trouble. The Dublin labourer cannot pay the rent of a proper hygienic dwelling, nor, if he could, are there 20,000 hygienic dwellings in Dublin at moderate rents ready for his occupation. These must be provided, and their provision will be a long, difficult, and expensive business. Still it must be faced, and, if no financial help or assistance can be obtained, we must meet the bill ourselves. The one-room tenement system must be attacked in every way, by stringent bye-laws, by refusal of rebates of taxation, by the offer of better accommodation at the same price elsewhere and under other conditions. The worst of the large tenement houses and all the wretched airless courts and alleys must be pulled down and a new working-class district, well provided with parks and public playgrounds, erected on their site. The better sort of tenement house may probably be converted into sets of self-contained two-room or three-room flats. Whole districts must be re-built, and the city to a large extent re-planned. There was a fine civic spirit at work many years ago when Westmoreland Street, D'Olier Street, College Green, O'Connell Bridge, and Sackville Street were designed. These characteristic and beautiful features of our city occupy the place of eighteenth-century slums and rookeries. Cannot we put something finer and better in the place of Cork Street, Church Street, and all their purlieus? May we not hope that His Excellency's generous offer of a prize of £500 for the best plan for the reconstruction of Dublin will provoke some such brilliant outburst of talent and civic spirit as history records in the not too remote past.

It will be said, doubtless, that the blame for the state of the slums lies with the slum-dwellers themselves, that the tenant of insanitary habits makes the house noisome, and so on, and that such people, if admitted to a palace, would soon turn it into a pigsty. We all know the stories of the bathroom used as a coal cellar and the water closet turned into a fowl-house. Undoubtedly there is a long educative process before those who would try to raise the standard of life of the Dublin labourer. His worst fault is his too easy acquiescence in a shameful and degrading position. He accepts the one-room tenement, with all that the one-room tenement implies, as his natural lot and often does not seem to think of, or try for anything better. If he had felt any real resentment against that system, he would not have elected so many owners of tenement

houses as members of the Corporation. Still, I think, he is beginning to awaken. And furthermore, if the better ideal is set constantly before him and if he finds more and more opportunities of putting that ideal into practice, he will probably readjust his standards of housing as readily as his brother the Irish rural labourer has done within recent memory. The old mud cabin was every degree as slipshod, as overcrowded, as insanitary, and dirty as the one-room tenement. The rural "labourer's cottage" is manifestly the dwelling of a man who feels that his home is a home and is worth a little care and attention. Who could feel much pride in the possession of a "two-pair back"?

There are other points which might be touched on, but which would require almost a separate paper for their discussion, for instance, the decasualising of quay labour, which has been put into practice in Liverpool, thus removing one great cause of unemployment. There is also the hope of turning an unskilled into a partially-skilled population by means of technical education; the creation of manufacturing industries in the city (that connected with dressed meat, for instance) as a means of removing its over-dependence on unskilled workers; the part played by subsidiary employments suited for young people, such, for instance, as the Dublin biscuit industry, which employs hundreds of girls and thereby lightens the burden of hundreds of labouring families.

It is a many-sided subject and could nowhere be more fittingly discussed than before the distinguished visitors who have so kindly promised to honour the Statistical Society with their presence this evening. We can assure Their Excellencies that we fully appreciate the compliment they have paid us by their interest in the subject selected for this evening's paper, and we believe that discussion of such a topic before workers for the public good so great and so successful as the Earl and Countess of Aberdeen cannot but be productive of advantage for the city in general and its labouring population in particular.