

V.—*On the Working of the Sanitary Laws in Dublin, with Suggestions for their Amendment.* By John Norwood, Esq., LL.D.

[Read Tuesday, 18th February, 1873.]

THE state of the laws relative to the Public Health in Ireland was, previous to the year 1866, extremely unsatisfactory.

The attention of the Town-Council of Dublin having been directed to the matter by a report of Edward D. Mapother, Esq., M.D., their officer of health, that body addressed a memorial, in the year 1865, to the Irish executive, stating the pressing necessity for immediate legislation; and their representations being confirmed by those of other Local authorities, and by the Poor Law Commissioners, Her Majesty's Government introduced the measure—embodying the English Sanitary Statutes up to 1855—known as “The Sanitary Act, 1866.” From that date the history and operation of effective sanitary legislation in Ireland practically commenced. That measure was, undoubtedly, a great step in advance, yet the period of the session when, and the circumstances under which, it was introduced, necessarily, prevented its being more carefully considered, while its framework rendered it especially complex and difficult in working.

There has grown up recently among official parliamentary draftsmen a slovenly method of framing bills. Instead of as far as possible making each statute complete in itself, they, in order to avoid trouble, include by incorporation or reference, in the crude measures they prepare, sections, or portions of sections from other subsidiary (and in some cases incongruous) acts, thereby causing endless trouble, cost, and litigation in the practical administration of the laws, and necessitating, generally in the very next session of Parliament, the passing of amending statutes.

In the acts I purpose to consider this evening is afforded a signal instance of this evil.

I know of no branch of legislation which requires, in the interests of the public and of humanity, to be more simple and capable of “being understood of all men,” than the Sanitary Laws. Dr. Rumsey, than whom there is no better authority on the subject, states that “simplification as well as consolidation” of the chaotic jumble of sanitary statutes is imperatively required. No later than last week one of our most experienced Divisional Justices, Mr. C. J. O'Donel, expressed himself as being almost unable to reconcile the inconsistent and confused sections of this complicated code.

But I can appeal to even higher authority for corroboration of my views on this matter. The judges of the Court of Queen's Bench in Westminster, thus expressed themselves in pronouncing judgment in the matter of the Justices of Southport, Lancashire:—“This case raised a question as to the construction of the Wine and Beer Act, 1869, and elicited some very strong observations from the court as to the mode in which the act was drawn, and the difficulty of construing it.

“Mr. Justice Blackburn observed that the difficulty arose from the practice of repealing parts of acts and incorporating parts, and thus making up an act of bits and fragments out of other acts, instead of clearly and simply stating what was enacted. In this way the legislation on the subject had been so blundered that it was very difficult indeed to make out what was meant; and he did not believe that the man who drew the act would be able to make it out. At the close of the argument,

“The Lord Chief Justice must say that in all his experience he had never known anything more confused and bungling than the course which had been resorted to in these enactments, and which was too frequently adopted in legislation. That course was to insert in a schedule parts of acts to be repealed in whole or in part, while others were left in force more or less incorporated with previous enactments; the result of which was to produce a complication and a confusion which produced the utmost difficulty in construction.

“Mr. Justice Blackburn was of the same opinion, although he could not say the case was clear, for it turned on the construction of acts of parliament, and therefore nothing in it could be clear. If it was desired to consolidate the law on any subject, the course was easy enough, and that was simply to enact in plain and simple terms what it was intended to enact. But instead of that, there had arisen a practice of repealing parts of some acts and incorporating parts of others, so as to create the greatest possible difficulty. He could not consider this the fault only of the draftsmen who drew the act, but he believed it was more the fault of the Government, who did not wish to take the plain and simple course, but rather preferred to pursue the other and less direct course, and who did so for this reason—that they thought there might be more difficulty in Parliament in carrying an act which would work, drawn in a plain and simple manner; and they, therefore, preferred an act drawn in a form in which it would pass, although it would not work, throwing upon the judges the *onus* of interpreting it, so as, if possible, to make it work. He differed from the Lord Chief Justice in thinking this the worst specimen of recent legislation, for he by no means thought it the worst. *There was a recent case on the Public-Health Acts which beat these acts hollow.*”

The Sanitary-Act received the Royal assent on the 7th day of August, 1866, and the Town Council lost no time in putting its provisions into operation. On the 22nd of that month, at a special meeting, the Public Health Committee was constituted, and a resolution adopted to memorial his Excellency the Lord Lieutenant to declare the provisions of the act in force within the borough. The committee held their first meeting on the 24th of August, and as cholera then prevailed in Dublin, they were at once necessitated to adopt energetic action in carrying into effect this new and important statute. The framing of notices and orders occupied their attention, and almost every form now used was framed by the committee, and after being subjected to the trying ordeal of judicial decision, has been adopted by other local authorities in this and the sister country.

I candidly admit that, while the Corporation has done much towards sanitary reform in Dublin, and achieved great and lasting improvements, yet they have not, from circumstances, been able as yet to carry out all the projects they contemplated. Legal difficulties, arising from causes I have glanced at—impatience of taxation by ratepayers without, and opposition from false economists within their body—have hampered their operations, and notwithstanding the assistance of an inexperienced and energetic staff, much has been left undone that ought to have been done, and our beautiful city, with the advantages of a mild climate, bisected by a noble river—affording a wide and free passage for the health-bestowing sea breezes—swept by the mountain airs, and enjoying access to delightful suburbs, is not as healthy as we all should desire, although I hope to show that we are not in as bad a condition as alarmists and theorists would lead the public to suppose.

The saying of a good word on behalf of the Corporation of Dublin may come on my audience with an air of novelty, but I think I can bespeak on behalf of that “best-abused” body the favorable consideration of the Society, when I allude to those two grand aids to salubrity—a plentiful supply of good water and improved drainage system.

The passage of the Dublin Waterworks Act, 24 and 25 Vic. cap. 172, was achieved with difficulty, in the face of vigorous, though I believe conscientious, opposition on the part of the citizens, and the Royal assent obtained on the 22nd July, 1861. I question if any measure promoted by the Municipal-Council ever gave such satisfaction. The Vartry scheme has been a signal success; the splendid works redound to the credit of Sir John Gray and the Town Council, and to the credit of our engineer, who conducted the works to a satisfactory conclusion. To the citizens and inhabitants of the surrounding townships the wholesome and abundant water supply is of incalculable value, and must exercise a most salutary influence on the health of the people. There are poured into the city, and nine surrounding townships and districts, no less than 13,574,440 gallons daily, of purest soft water, of which the amount of 6,874,638 gallons is in excess of the quantity necessary to give 21 gallons per head per diem to the whole population. The townships consume 1,875,418 gallons per diem. No city in the kingdom is better supplied with this chiefest necessary of life; and although the works cost, in round numbers, £550,000—a sum considerably in excess of the original estimate—I think it will be found that few cities have obtained so fine a supply, delivered at high pressure, on such moderate terms. The increase in the cost over the estimate was caused principally by the large compensations awarded to land-owners, and yet the capital cost per head of the population is but £1 17s., while in Liverpool the water supply cost £2 10s., in Manchester, £3, and in Glasgow, £3 10s. per head of the population.

The Waterworks-Committee, I may mention, erected no fewer than 67 new fountains in crowded localities, at the request of the Public Health Committee, and have, invariably, seconded their efforts in the flushing of sewers and channel-courses. In improving the

sewerage and drainage of the city the Corporation has been steadily engaged since 1852, according to a general plan scientifically laid down and carried out by Mr. Neville, C.E., and the cost of their works has been defrayed out of the rate of 4d. in the pound, authorised to be raised under The Dublin Improvement Act, 1849, for sewerage purposes. The total length of new sewers constructed within that period of twenty years, and of old ones deepened, or otherwise improved and repaired, including the river Poddle, is about 90 miles, at a cost of somewhere about £100,000. The completion of the drainage of the city must necessarily conduce to the general improvement of the health of the population.

But supplementary to the general drainage of the city, the purification of the river Liffey, and construction of the lines of intercepting sewers, is the next great sanitary improvement being carried out by the municipal body.

The Dublin Main-Drainage Act, 34 & 35 Vic. c. 28, received the sanction of Parliament on the 30th July, 1871, and the committee entrusted with the duty of carrying its provisions into effect have nearly completed the working plans, drawings, and specifications, and are about to advertise for tenders for contracts. For this purpose the Corporation obtained "An Act to Amend the 'Sanitary Act, 1866,' so far as it relates to the City of Dublin," which, among other things, enables them to borrow £350,000 on most favorable terms from the Government. They anticipate that during the coming summer the works will be commenced, and that within a period of about three years "the great reproach of Dublin"—the foulness of the Liffey—will be removed, and the thorough and effective drainage of the metropolis will be complete.

As far, then, as water-supply and drainage are concerned, our city will shortly be in as favorable a condition: ~~as in the hands of the Ministry's~~ dominions.

Let us now see how other sanitary matters are managed. The Sanitary Committee have the advantage of the active co-operation of the Commissioners of Metropolitan Police, who placed at their disposal the services of their most intelligent members of the force, who have carried out the orders with an ability, impartiality, and success which has been frequently commended by the Divisional Justices.

The Committee are justified by the experience of the past six years in holding the opinion that sanitary measures can best be carried out in Dublin through the officers of this force, inasmuch as they act with an authority and sanction superior to civilians, are trained in habits of method and discipline, and are subject as well to the supervision of the Public-Health Committee, as also to the orders and surveillance of the Commissioners and their officers, to whom they report from week to week.

It would be a useful measure to cause every constable to report daily the condition of the streets, lanes, and alleys on his beat, and the existence of any nuisance.

To the enlightened consideration given by the Divisional Justices to the sanitary business in the metropolitan police courts, and for

the anxiety which they evince to aid in the administration of this difficult code, both the citizens, and the Committee are deeply indebted.

The staff of officers engaged in the discharge of sanitary duties in the city consists of the secretary, James Boyle, Esq., C.E., whose practical and professional knowledge has enabled him to afford much assistance in the effecting of structural works; the officer of health, Dr. Mapother; the city analyst, Dr. Cameron; two inspectors, Messrs. Halligan and Berry; eight sanitary serjeants, and four constables specially charged with the detection of diseased meat. If the Commissioners of Police could spare four additional serjeants, the transaction of sanitary business would be more satisfactorily and fully discharged, without unduly burdening the ratepayers. The annual cost of the Sanitary Department of the Corporation varies from £1,500 to £2,000 per annum.

I would now advert to the serious impediments in the way of prompt and decisive action in the abatement of nuisances, arising from the cumbrous and multiplied forms requisite under the present state of the law. If the impediments from this source were removed, the efficient working-power of our staff would be increased in manifold. In cases where resistance is given to the orders of the magistrate for the abatement of a nuisance, no fewer than from fifteen to eighteen, and sometimes even more, visits of inspection have to be paid to the premises and the police court, by the sanitary serjeant; no fewer than ten different forms filled—seven of them being in duplicate—and much precious time is wasted.

I have here, by way of example, the actual documents served in three several cases in which nuisances of a grave character existed on premises owned by house-jobbers—than whom there are no more culpable offenders against the public health and the poor.

In this case R. W. was served with the statutable notice, on the 9th of August, 1872, to provide proper accommodation for his tenants, and to cleanse the premises (which were in a most filthy condition) within three days. He set the law at defiance, and would not even appear; and it was not until the 11th of November, when the Public-Health Committee applied, by counsel, for a body warrant to commit him to jail for refusing to pay the penalties imposed on him for disobedience of the orders of the magistrates, that anything was done. In this case no fewer than sixteen visits were paid by the serjeant to the premises; the case was heard on six different occasions by the magistrates, and this mass of ten forms—seven in duplicate—had to be filled and served; and meanwhile the wretched tenants were suffered to dwell in discomfort and filth, and sickness to prevail, unchecked, in the premises.

It may be suggested that the Public-Health Committee should avail themselves of the alternative given in the statute, of having the work done themselves, in the default of the owner or occupier having matters set to right. I need scarcely say that the miserable occupiers of the houses could not do so, and the Committee hesitated to undertake a task of such magnitude, and involving the retention of a numerous and expensive staff of workmen (who could not be continuously employed or always available). I may state, by way of

information, that of the 23,895 inhabited houses in the city, there are no fewer than 9,300 houses let in tenements, occupied by an average of eleven souls per house, and of these about 1,000 are owned by three individuals; of these 9,300 houses about one-third require continuous supervision, one-third occasional inspection, while the remaining one-third only less frequently require our interference.

While dealing with the subject of the dwellings of the poor I may add that 110 cellars, used as dwelling-places, have been closed by the Public-Health Committee, and the reports of the sanitary sergeants shew that there are now but 57 cellars occupied as dwellings, which we cannot close by reason of their not coming within the provisions of the "Public Health Act, 1848," sec. 67.

One serious legislative want in the metropolis is a Building Act, similar to that possessed by Belfast and other corporate towns. From this defect it is only when an house is actually inhabited that the Public-Health Committee can legally interfere. Now prevention, I hold, is better than cure, and being of that opinion I induced the Corporation to embody in a bill promoted by them in the session of 1868—entitled "The Dublin Abattoirs, Markets, and General Improvements Bill"—clauses for the regulation of the construction and sewerage of dwellings, and for the provision of sanitary accommodation, ventilation, etc. This bill, unfortunately, was withdrawn; but I hope that in any Sanitary Amendment Bill that such a defect will be remedied. In Belfast—of which I know something—no house is permitted to be erected until the plan has been submitted to, and approved by, the borough surveyor, who insists that proper sewerage, drainage, ventilation, sanitary accommodation, security against fire, etc., are duly provided.

There is great difficulty in legally obtaining the closing of houses condemned by our medical officer of health as unfit for human habitation, especially in the cases of houses left derelict (there being no owners), of which there are very many in Dublin, occupied by very poor tenants, and the magistrates do not feel themselves warranted in giving orders to turn out tenants from such houses, when the landlord had failed to evict them or there is no owner found. That proposed bill also dealt with a legislative defect of great importance. The Public Health Committee can only—under the Sanitary Act—deal very partially with dairy-yards. Their condition in Dublin is very bad, and has been frequently the subject of reports to the Committee. The animals are so crowded together in many of them that they can only lie down alternately, the length of space from the manger to the channel-course is but 11 feet to 11 feet 6 inches, and the average air space allotted to each varies from 280 to 290 cubic feet. Thus wedged together in low, foul sheds, they re-inhale the air vitiated by their neighbours, by the exudations from their carcases, and by ammonia, while the fetid exhalations permeate the hay on which they feed, and which usually forms the roof of the shed. So remaining from November to May, without exercise and uncleanly, the condition of both flesh and milk cannot fail to be deteriorated. In London and elsewhere the local act provides that 600 cubic feet of space be allotted to each animal, and 1,000 cubic feet

of air-space in cases where there are dwellings over their stalls. The Public-Health Committee required that previous to being licensed each dairy-yard should be certified by the officer of health to be properly drained, paved, lighted, and ventilated; provided with an adequate supply of water, with proper grain-bins, manure-pits, etc.; and that 500 cubic feet of air be allowed to each cow, and 700 in case the shed have rooms inhabited over it.

This matter will, I trust, not be neglected when amendments have to be considered. The bill provided, also, for the construction of abattoirs and lairs for cattle, and the closing of existing slaughter-houses as soon as the public abattoirs should have been erected.

This sanitary improvement cannot long be delayed, and will be facilitated by the passing of the recent Local Government Act.

Of the 121 slaughter-yards within the city boundary, the Committee closed 37 of the worst, and a strict supervision is maintained by weekly inspections over the remainder, in many of which the owners have vested interests protected by the "Dublin Improvements Act;" and the Council has very seldom granted licenses to open new ones—and then only in very exceptional cases, and after careful inspection by the sanitary officers.

The Committee erected a disinfecting chamber, which has been largely availed of by the public, and wherein clothes, bedding, etc., are disinfected, free of charge.

They likewise suggested to the governors of the various Hospitals the necessity for establishing at each an hot-air chamber for disinfection; but the authorities did not see their way to the adoption of the suggestion. During the prevalence of epidemics, depots of disinfectants should also be provided at the several hospitals. The law is defective in not permitting the sanitary authorities to compensate parties where it is necessary to destroy bedding, or, in certain cases, to destroy clothing and other articles.

The Council deserve credit for the establishment of the Morgue and Coroners' Court. No trifling difficulties met them at every step; but by the perseverance of Mr. A. M. Sullivan and other members they were at last overcome. The Police Commissioners had called attention to the outrage on humanity and decency which was caused by the practice of leaving the wretched remains of the waifs and strays of life to lie on the foul straw of a stable-yard, or in a low out-house, while awaiting the inquest—exposed to the attacks of dogs or vermin. This is all changed. The Committee, after examining the best plans, fitted up the Morgue in Marlborough-street in such a manner as to be not inferior to any in the kingdom. The room for *post-mortem* examinations is a model one, and the coroners' court and jury-rooms are superior to many of our county courts.

The establishment of a Convalescent Home was pressed on the attention of the Town-Council by one of the most influential deputations which probably ever waited on that body. Fully alive to the necessity for such an institution, the Council laboured to secure suitable premises, but without effect. The very mention of the establishment—the Convalescent Hospital—was sufficient to alarm a neighbourhood. Its position should be healthy, and not too distant

from the city hospitals. As a last resource, the Committee secured a field of six acres in extent, in a convenient and salubrious locality. They obtained plans, specifications, and tenders, and were about to proceed with the project, when it was discovered that the law as to the fund from which the cost should be defrayed, was so uncertain, that the plan is for the present placed in abeyance; and the public auditor has signified his intention to surcharge the three members of the Council who signed the warrant for payment of the purchase-money of the ground. Two eminent lawyers are at issue on the point; and it is held by some to be doubtful whether the Council can legally establish a Convalescent Home outside of the borough boundary.

A fruitful cause of illness is the permitting of refuse, and superabundant moisture to remain lying on streets, lanes, and alleys, which, in addition, soften the surface and cause the rapid wear. The speedy removal of refuse, and the scavenging of streets, is a useful sanitary operation. The Council have had to contend with no ordinary difficulties in cleansing the streets, viz.: a wet climate, inferior materials, the want of convenient depots, and very inadequate funds. There is, however, "a good time coming." The Corporation has applied to Government for a loan of £50,000, to be applied to putting the streets in thorough repair, for the purchase of plant, etc. They are about to avail themselves of the tramway-system for the more facile removal to distant depots of the scavenge and refuse from houses; and the adoption of this measure will enable the cleansing of a number of the streets to be effected as in other towns, by night.

I desire now to lay before you a summary, authenticated not only by the books and secretary of the Public Health Committee, but also by the returns furnished weekly to the Commissioners of Metropolitan Police, of the sanitary operations of that Committee during the six years it has been constituted—that is from the 24th August, 1866, to the 30th of September, 1872:—

*Return of Sanitary Operations.*

2,223	Sewers and house drains constructed.
5,888	do. repaired and cleansed.
1,903	Offices and closets constructed.
8,408	do. repaired.
1,705	Ashpits constructed.
34,985	Offices and ashpits cleansed.
6,383	Dwellings repaired and cleansed.
263	Dwellings condemned and closed, being unfit for human habitation.
198	Dwellings reported to the City Engineer as being dangerous.
110	Cellar dwellings condemned and closed.
16,516	Yards and external premises cleansed.
1,029	Lanes and alleys cleansed by private parties.
4,738	Accumulations of manure removed.
1,685	Swine removed from dwellings.
396	Other animals removed from dwellings.
4,652	Swine removed from yards where kept offensively.



31	Nuisances from smoke abated.
7	do. from chandleries.
6	do. from bone yards.
2	do. from glue and size manufactories.
13	do. from chemical works.
2	do. from manure works.
12	do. from other manufactories.
1,184	Other nuisances abated.
201,072	Inspections of tenement houses.
438,346	do. tenement rooms.
18,712	do. nightly lodging-houses.
8,768	do. bakeries.
15,956	do. slaughter-houses.
303	do. dairy-yards.
563	Inspections under Workshop Regulation Act, 1867.
274	Certificates of destitution to entitle to gratuitous interment.
845	Water supplied to tenement houses.
113,711	Sanitary defects discovered.
112,629	Sanitary defects remedied.
3,791	Infected dwellings inspected and cleansed.
721	do. chemically disinfected.
8	Convictions for nuisances from smoke.
7	do. for nuisances from manufactories.
38	do. nightly-lodging keepers for breaches of bye-laws.
64	do. butchers for breaches of bye-laws.
23	do. bakers do. do.
59	do. for slaughtering in unlicensed premises.
4	do. for breaches of Workshop Act, 1867.
29	do. of dairy-yard owners for filthy premises.
13,571	do. for ordinary sanitary offences.
58,449	Notices served.
13,913	Summonses served.
13,803	Total number of convictions.
70	Cases dismissed.
19	Cases standing over.
305	Disinfecting chamber used by persons.
92,708	Number of articles disinfected.
131	Number of registered nightly lodging-houses
121	do. do. slaughter-houses.
93	do. do. do. in use—average.

The sanitary department, presided over by the city analyst, Dr. Cameron, is one of the highest importance for the public weal, and the results vindicate that distinguished analyst's claim to ability and energy in the discharge of his duties. Since the year 1866, he has succeeded in securing the condemnation of the following enormous quantities of food utterly unfit for human use:—

				lbs.
Beef	...	...	...	1,306,600
Mutton	...	...	...	10,238
Veal	...	...	...	4,100
Lamb	...	...	...	1,660
Pork	...	...	...	54,170
Bacon and Ham	...	...	...	56,012
Venison	...	...	...	460
Fish	...	...	...	56,980
Fruit and Vegetables	...	...	...	14,200
Tea, Cheese, Butter, &c.	...	...	...	1,266

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1,505,686

There were samples of food analysed, with the following results :— pure, 998 ; adulterated, 466 ; total 1,464. Analyses of petroleum, water, sewage, etc., for sanitary purposes, 186. 254 persons were convicted of selling, or intending to sell, diseased or adulterated food ; 14 persons were imprisoned for periods varying from one to three months for selling diseased meat. The fines for selling adulterated and diseased food amounted to £761 18s. 6d.

In no city in the United Kingdom has so large an amount of diseased food been destroyed. In Dublin alone has the Adulteration of Food Act been actively put in force. From 1860 to 1872 only 56 analyses of food were made by the public analyst in London, and there have been, I am informed, few, if any, convictions. During last year there were 67 persons fined in Dublin in the sum of £308 10. ; 11 confectioners were fined for selling poisonous and adulterated confections, and this nefarious trade has been completely stopped in Dublin.

The supply of all articles, including medicines and drugs, has been wonderfully improved by the operations of this department. The *London Chemical News* says, when commenting on Dr Cameron's Annual Report for 1870, "without entering into further details, it appears that in Dublin they thoroughly understand, value, and carry very efficiently into effect, what is very properly termed *administration de la salubrité et sureté publique*. The excellent example given by Dublin deserves to be imitated elsewhere ; for the want of a good and efficient system exists in many English towns, and, not the least, in this metropolis."

Dr. Cameron's invaluable services embrace also numerous reports on the milk from diseased cows, the humane method of slaughtering animals, the reclamation of waste lands, the safe storage of petroleum, the composition of dangerous well-waters, the best mode of disinfecting dwellings, etc.

These figures represent a vast amount of practical work, which must have a real and beneficial effect on the general health of the community, and afford a triumphant answer to those persons who enquired, "whether there existed in Dublin a Public-Health Department ?"

Let me glance for a few moments at the amendments which have been suggested in the laws.

We require a better and more comprehensive definition of the word "nuisance."

A better machinery should be provided for the removal of the sick to hospital, under sec. 26 of the Sanitary Act. The process at present is too complex, the certificate is not always conveniently procurable, and the legal power to carry out the order is not given to any specific officer. The power of removal in some cases should be compulsory.

Wakes in seasons of epidemics are a fruitful cause of the spread of disease, and more effective power should be given to local authorities to prevent them, and to compel and to aid in interments. The power of directing speedy interments should be given, not as an extraordinary but an ordinary one. By giving small pecuniary assistance for the burial of poor persons the Committee prevented the holding of many wakes, and, no doubt, saved valuable lives. They invoked the aid of his Eminence Cardinal Cullen, who promptly issued a pastoral letter condemning the holding of wakes, and exhorting the people to habits of sobriety and cleanliness, which was read in all the churches and had a most useful effect.

Extended powers, under "The Nuisance Removal Act, 1855," of entry for sanitary officers is required. It should not be necessary to aver the belief in the existence of a nuisance; the magistrate's order should be made to last sufficient time to see that directions are complied with, there should be no restriction as to the time of inspection, and costs should be given in case of refusal of permission to officers to enter. The forms, generally, should be shortened and rendered less cumbrous, and the remedies should be sharp and decisive.

The conversion of old buildings into dwellings should be subject to supervision, as well as the erection of new dwelling-houses and of factories. All houses should be under the supervision of the local authorities, irrespective of occupation.

The local authorities should have power to fill up cellars, and effectually prevent their use as dwellings.

The present law for the prevention of smoke nuisance is ambiguous and confused. The words "as far as practicable," in the 19th section of "The Sanitary Act, 1866," are not sufficiently definite, and it would be more satisfactory to have the trades enumerated.

The power of appeal should be speedier and cheaper, and means should be given for regulating the state of an house, etc., pending the appeal, as at present the occupiers may be decimated by typhus or other disease ere the law-point be decided.

The certificate of a medical attendant should be necessary before persons infected with contagious or infectious disease should be allowed to travel in public conveyances.

Section 37 of "The Sanitary Act, 1866," requires amendment, as power should be given for the maintenance of sick and of the attendants in hospitals. There is considerable confusion as to the different authorities charged with providing the hospital accommodation, the medical staff, and for the conveyance to hospital of sick.

The power given to local authorities to take sick sailors out of ships for hospital treatment is not sufficiently clear, and power

should be given to recover from captains and owners the expenses of sailors in hospital. The difficulty of dealing with infected shipping should be remedied, as a conflict sometimes arises as to which is the "nearest authority." There should also be larger powers given to local authorities to see that proper lodging accommodation, wholesome water, etc., are provided on board ships for the seafaring population; and power to charge the ship-owners should be given.

In time of prevalence of epidemics an house of refuge for seamen should, in sea ports, be provided.

We require in Dublin that more extended powers should be given to the Corporation for the formation of wide and improved streets through crowded and decayed localities. The action of that body in effecting such desirable improvements is unduly hampered by the provisions of the 61st section of "The Dublin Improvement Act," cap. 97.

Greater facilities should be given for borrowing moneys for sanitary improvements at low rates of interest, and for providing for their repayment at extended periods, say fifty years; and in cases where the 49th section of the Sanitary Act is put in force, the repayment should be partly by sinking fund, and partly by instalments.

But the hopes of sanitary reformists are brightening. In Dublin the question has been earnestly taken up by our leading professional men and practical citizens, and much good will, I have no doubt, be effected by "The Dublin Sanitary Association." The Corporation, far from feeling jealous of its interference, seem to hail it as a fellow-labourer in the interests of humanity, and the generous rivalry between the two bodies, will be, I trust, to strive which will achieve the most success in raising the physical and moral condition of the people. There is one mode especially by which the Association can advance the cause of sanitary reform, namely, by educating the people, and showing that their health and dearest interests will be best secured by obedience to the sanitary laws. This course, I am happy to see, the Association are about to adopt, through a series of lectures on sanitary science, by distinguished members of their society.

In the sister island, sanitary reformers have been busy in the good work. In the report published in 1870, of "The Royal Sanitary Commission," which was appointed in November, 1868, of which Sir Charles Adderley was chairman, and of which our distinguished countryman, Dr. Stokes, was a leading member, a mass of the most valuable information is contained, gathered from the evidence of nearly one hundred witnesses, among whom are numbered the chief scientific and practical sanitary authorities in Britain. That Commission was appointed to enquire into sewerage, drainage, water supply, removal of refuse, control of buildings, the prevention of overcrowding, and of the introduction and spread of contagious and infectious diseases and epidemics affecting the health of man. To that report I am indebted for much valuable information.

After considering the best means for the improved administration of sanitary laws, the proper constitution of central and local authorities, the formation of areas proper to be controlled by local authori-

ties, the operation of the registration system, and suggesting divers improvements, they sum up the result of their laborious investigations in two leading suggestions:—

1. That the present fragmentary and confused sanitary legislation should be consolidated, and that the administration of sanitary law should be made uniform, universal, and imperative throughout the kingdom.

2. That all powers requisite for the health of town and country should, in every place, be possessed by one responsible local authority, kept in action and assisted by a superior central authority.

Their suggestions and their principles were embodied in the "Bill to Consolidate and Amend the Law relating to Public Health and Local Government in England and Wales, except the Metropolis," introduced by Sir Charles Adderley and other leading members of Parliament in the last session. It is a most admirable and comprehensive code, containing over 450 clauses, and will stand an enduring monument of their philanthropy and public spirit. Although withdrawn last year, it or a similar measure will be introduced into Parliament during the present session, and will (it is to be hoped) pass into law. If Her Majesty's ministers introduce it as a Government bill, they will, I trust, include Ireland within its operation, or introduce along with it a similar measure for this country.

VI.—*Proceedings of the Statistical and Social Inquiry Society of Ireland.*

TWENTY-SIXTH SESSION: FIRST MEETING.

[Tuesday, 19th November, 1872.]

The Society met at the Leinster Lecture Hall, 35, Molesworth-street, The Right Hon. Mr. Justice Lawson, President of the Society, in the chair.

Mr. Joseph T. Pim read the Report of the Council.

The President delivered the Opening Address.

SECOND MEETING.

[Tuesday, 17th December, 1872.]

The Society met at the Leinster Lecture Hall, 35, Molesworth-street, The Right Hon. Mr. Justice Lawson, President, in the chair.

Mr. D. Caulfeild Heron, Q.C., M.P., read a paper entitled "A Visit to Russia."

The following gentlemen were declared duly elected Members of the Society:—Cornelius Dennehy, Esq., T.C., J.P., H. L. Jephson, Esq., and Samuel Thomas S. Richardson, Esq.

THIRD MEETING.

[Tuesday, 21st January, 1873.]

The Society met at the Leinster Lecture Hall, 35, Molesworth-street, The Right Hon. Mr. Justice Lawson, President, in the chair.

Mr. William Graham Brooke, read a Report on "The Differences