

**“SLUMS: A SOCIOLOGICAL RETROSPECT OF THE  
CITY OF DUBLIN.”**

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[Read Friday, 23rd January, 1914.]

In submitting a paper on a subject which, at the present moment, is engrossing public attention, I wish to observe strictly the rules of the Society which rightly exclude the introduction of “topics likely to produce discussions connected with religious differences or party politics.” But with this reservation I wish to bring before the Society certain historical facts which, in my opinion, have led to the present deplorable condition of the housing of the poor, with its attendant evil consequences. If I required an excuse for my paper, I would quote the words of the Chief Secretary, Right Hon. A. Birrell, M.P., in reply to a deputation which recently waited on him in reference to the Dublin Housing Problem:—“As long as people rested content to live surrounded by such things as had been described, they were in a bad way themselves, perhaps even in a worse way than their poorer neighbours, who endured these terrible conditions. The more that was said, and thought, and written on the subject, particularly when there seemed to be a little light lifting over that black veil, the better it would be for all. . . . It was the awakening of public opinion that was, after all, the only security for the remedy of the terrible evils which existed in Dublin.” (29th October, 1913).

We have a graphic description of the grandeur of Dublin during the latter part of the eighteenth century, in a book which has been recently published, “The Georgian Society.” Speaking of Merrion Square, in which the first four houses were built in 1762, it says:—“In Georgian days, particularly the closing years of the eighteenth century, this was a most fashionable quarter. Peers and Parliament men predominated, and a house in Merrion Square was considered essential for social success. Little change was wrought by the Union, for few of the former members were returned to the Imperial

Parliament, partly owing to the reduced representation of Ireland, and partly because the increased cost precluded barristers, so numerous in the Irish House, and, in fact, all except the wealthier country gentlemen, from sitting at Westminster. . . . The aristocratic inhabitants used to make the square a fashionable promenade." (Vol. IV., p. 69).

Here is another picture in the year 1900 by the Medical Officer of Health:—"Dublin is, in truth, a poor city, and no street and square in it is distant 500 yards from a purlieu. . . . You cannot walk 500 yards in Dublin without coming to a place inhabited by the very lowest section of the people. All round Merrion Square, all round Fitzwilliam Square there are purlieus."

As the late Recorder of Dublin, Sir Frederick Falkiner, has truly said:—"The current history of Dublin is a tale of two cities, a city of splendour and a city of squalor: diverse as the poles."

(Transactions of National Association for the Promotion of Social Science, Dublin, 1881, p. 571).

### CENSUS OF IRELAND, 1911.

According to the recent census figures (Cd. 6049-II.), the population of the city (or County Borough) of Dublin is 304,802. The land area (excluding 166 acres of water) is 7,745 acres. Deducting from that acreage 1,314 acres under crop, 1,905 acres under grass, and 64 acres of plantations, we have 4,462 acres of houses, roads, streets, on which 304,802 people live, or 68·3 persons per acre (Table I.).

Sir Charles Cameron, in his Health Report for 1912, says there are 38·8 persons per acre in the city, but that calculation is based on the larger acreage.

The number of houses is 35,477, or an average of 8·2 persons per house; and the number of distinct families is 62,365, or an average of 4·6 per family (Table 8).

The Professional Class numbers 18,438; and the Domestic Class numbers 18,232.

The Medical Class numbers 2,358, or .77 per cent. of the population, made up as follows:—Physician, surgeon, and general practitioner, 342; dentist, assistant, 180; medical student, assistant, 470; subordinate medical assistant, 849; midwife, 215; hospital certificated nurse, 302.

The Clerical Class numbers 1,784, or .58 per cent. of the population, made up as follows:—Clergy, 415; monks, 157; nuns, 829; itinerant preachers, 46; theological students, 265; others, 72.

There are 85 principal public institutions in the city, with a population of 18,629, of which 15,533 were special inmates, such as paupers, patients, lunatics, prisoners, leaving 3,096 other than special inmates.

	City Boundary Extension by Dublin Corporation Act, 1900.			
	1881	1891.	1901.	1911.
Population ..	249,602	245,001	290,638	304,802
Acreage ..	3,807	3,733	4,161 " A."	4,462 " B."
Density of Pop. per acre.	65.5	65.6	69.8	68.3
No. of Families	54,725	51,851	59,263	62,364
No. of Houses Inhabited.	24,211	25,764	32,061	35,477
No. of Houses Uninhabited.	3,060	3,448	3,195	1,934

" A "—Not including 1,309 acres under crop.  
           "           2,183           "   grass.  
           "           74           "   plantations.  
           "           118           "   fallow.

" B "—Not including 1,314 acres under crop.  
           "           1,905           "   grass.  
           "           64           "   plantations.

### POOR LAWS.

(1). " An Act for erecting a workhouse in the City of  
 1703.           Dublin for employing and maintaining the  
                   poor thereof." 2 *Anne*, c. 19.

The first direct provision for the relief of the poor was made in 1703 by the above Act, the preamble of which

states "that the necessities, number, and continual increase of the poor within the City of Dublin and liberties thereto adjoining, are very great and exceedingly burdensome, for want of workhouses to set them to work, and a sufficient authority to compel thereto." A corporation to have perpetual succession was created, and called "The Governors and Guardians of the poor of the City of Dublin," with power "to apprehend all idle or poor people begging or seeking relief, or who receive parish alms within the county of the city or liberties thereto adjoining . . . and also to detain and keep in the service of the said corporation until the age of sixteen years any poor child or children found or taken up within the said city or liberties above the age of five years," and to apprentice out such children to any honest persons, being Protestants, a male child under the age of 24 and a female child under the age of 21 (s. 4).

Section 11 enacts "that all that the parcel of ground walled in on the south-west end of James's Street and a parcel of land adjoining thereto, called the pipes, containing about 14 acres, on which are built several houses called George's Folly, being the donation of the said city, for and towards the support of the said workhouse, shall be and is hereby vested in the said governors and guardians of the poor of the said City of Dublin, and their successors for ever, for the use, support, and maintenance of the said poor to be employed in the said workhouse."

On 24th June, 1710, the House of Commons "Resolved, *nemine contradicente*, that the strict and due execution of the several laws in force in this kingdom against sturdy beggars, and for confining the poor thereof to their respective parishes, would be a public and seasonable service to this kingdom." (Irish Com. Jour., Vol. III., p. 780).

(2.) An Act (*inter alia*) "for establishing a regular watch in the City of Dublin." 10 Geo. I., c. 3.

Section 17 recites: "And whereas great number of idle and vagrant persons do daily resort from the country to the City of Dublin and suburbs thereof, who, by reason of the correspondence they generally keep with the beadles of the several parishes, and the neglect of such beadles in the performance of their duty, are permitted to beg in and throughout this city."

The Lord Mayor was empowered to make rules for beadles to clear the city of beggars and inflict a fine of

10s., and, in default of payment and distress, to send them to house of correction for 48 hours.

- (3). "An Act for the better regulating the Workhouse of the City of Dublin, and to regulate and provide for the poor thereof." 1 *Geo.* II., c. 27.

We see from the preamble of this Act, that 2 Anne, c. 19, "hath not answered the good end and design proposed thereby: but notwithstanding the said Act the city and liberties thereto adjoining are extremely burdened with great numbers of poor and idle vagrants, many of whom are able to work and earn their bread, if proper care were taken to regulate and employ them."

The corporation was reconstituted, and called "The Governors of the Workhouse of the City of Dublin (s. 2), and their powers were extended to "full power and authority to seize and apprehend any sturdy beggar or beggars, or other idle vagabond or vagabonds, . . . begging or strolling, or frequenting any of the streets or houses within the said city or suburbs of Dublin or the liberties adjoining," and any person so apprehended could be committed to the workhouse for any term not longer than four years with hard labour.

"And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid: That all and every poor child or children, found or taken up within the city or liberties, which shall be left to be maintained by any parish or parishes in the said city or liberties aforesaid, who are unable to support themselves, shall, from and after the age of six years, be admitted and received into the said workhouse, and there be taught to read and write and thoroughly instructed in the principles of the Protestant religion of the Church of Ireland, as by law established." (s. 26).

"And whereas the exposed or foundling children left yearly on the several parishes in the city and suburbs of Dublin are very numerous, and do mostly perish before they attain the age of six years for want of due care and provision for them: and it is manifest that neither the workhouse of the said city or the fund thereof is large enough for the reception or relief of such foundlings before they attain the age aforesaid: it is therefore enacted that overseers of the poor shall be elected for every parish in the city and liberties to take care of foundlings till admitted into the workhouse," s. 28. Section 20 provides "that a parish cess be made for their support."

1729. (4). "An Act for the better enabling the Governors of the Workhouse of the City of Dublin to provide for and employ the poor therein, and for the more effectual punishment of vagabonds: and also for the better securing of and providing for lunatics and foundling children." 3 *Geo. II.*, c. 17.

Section 6 enacts, "That from and after 25th March, 1730, the governors of the said workhouse shall receive from the church-wardens of the respective parishes of the said city and liberties adjoining all the exposed and foundling children that shall then be in the said city and liberties thereunto adjoining under the age of six years."

1735. (5). Section 2 recited: "That there are great numbers of loose idle vagrants, and of loose persons of infamous lives and characters in Dublin, and the County of Dublin," and it is enacted "that such persons may be presented by the Grand Juries of the Court of King's Bench, or the Session of Oyer and Terminer and Gaol delivery, held in the King's Courts after term for the county, or City of Dublin, and sent on board His Majesty's fleet, or transported for seven years." 9 *Geo. II.*, c. 6.

In 1737 Swift published "A Proposal for giving Badges to the Beggars in all the Parishes of Dublin," and from it we gather that the House of Industry did not afford adequate relief for the poor. "The principal end I take to have been that of maintaining the poor and orphans of the city, where the parishes are not able to do it; and clearing the streets from all strollers, foreigners and sturdy beggars, with which, to the universal complaint and admiration, Dublin is more infested since the establishment of the poorhouse, than it was ever known to be since its first erection."

1749. (6). "An Act to provide for begging children, and for the better regulation of Charity Schools, and for taking up vagrant and offensive beggars in the City of Dublin and liberties thereof, and the liberties thereto adjoining." 23 *Geo. II.*, c. 11.

The preamble recites: "Whereas there are in almost every part of the Kingdom great numbers of helpless

children who are forced to beg, and who will in all likelihood, if some proper care be not taken of their education, become hereafter not only unprofitable but dangerous to their country."

"And whereas several strolling beggars and vagrants, labouring under various disorders which render them not only offensive to the sight, but also dangerous to the health of many of the inhabitants of the City of Dublin, do daily resort from different parts of this kingdom to beg alms in the public streets and liberties of the said city to the great annoyance of the inhabitants thereof, by exposing their infirmities in order to move compassion. And whereas the Court of Assistants of the Governors of the Workhouse of the said city, or any one or more of them, are empowered in and by an Act (3 Geo. II., c. 17) to commit all such beggars and vagrants to the said workhouse; but the said workhouse, not being capable of containing or accommodating the great numbers of such beggars and vagrants who resort to the said city, several of the Governors of the said Workhouse, with others charitably inclined, have erected an almshouse in the said city, called the Hospital for Incurables, where several such miserable objects are attended by physicians and surgeons and provided with all necessaries" (s. 10).

In 1768 Dr. Richard Woodward, then Dean of Clogher, published "An Argument of the Right of the Poor in this Kingdom to a National Provision," in which he lays down three propositions: "(1) That the poor are so inadequately provided for by voluntary contributions in this kingdom as to stand in need of some legal title to a maintenance. (2) That it is the indispensable duty of the rich to provide a competent maintenance for the poor. (3) That it is eminently for the interests of the commonwealth that this duty be discharged in an ample and effectual manner." Strange as it may appear, this was the first proposal for a national provision for the Irish poor, although it had been the birthright of the English poor for 167 years.

- (7). "An Act for better regulating the Foundling Hospital and Workhouse in the City of Dublin, and increasing the Fund for the support thereof." 11-12 *Geo. III.*, c. 11.  
1772.

This Act repeals all previous Acts, and creates a Corporation, with a common seal, "to be called the Governors of the Foundling Hospital and Workhouse of the City of Dublin" (s. 4). It further enacts: "Whereas the reception of vagabonds and strolling beggars into the same

house or within the same walls with children will be manifestly injurious by the setting a bad example. . . . Be it enacted that, after 24th June, 1772, no vagabond or strolling beggar shall be sent into the same house, or kept within the same walls with the children hereby intended to be provided for" (s. 13).

- (8). "An Act for Badging such poor as shall be found unable to support themselves by labour, and otherwise providing for them, and for restraining such as shall be found unable to support themselves by labour or industry from begging." 11-12 *Geo. III.*, c. 30.

Preamble:—"Whereas strolling beggars are very numerous in this kingdom: And whereas it is become equally necessary to give countenance and assistance to those poor who shall be found disabled by old age or infirmities to earn their living, as to restrain and punish those who may be able to support themselves by labour or industry, and yet may choose to live in idleness by begging: and it is just to call upon the humane and affluent to contribute to support of real objects of charity."

Section 5 requires the corporations created by the Act "to build hospitals, to be called Workhouses or Houses of Industry, as plain, as durable, and at as moderate expense as possible."

Speaking of this Act, the Royal Commission of 1833-1836 says in the First Report:—"There is more truth, more common sense; there are more sound views of political economy in this title, in this preamble, than in all the previous Acts of the Irish Legislature put together. Had the same wisdom directed them in carrying out the details of their measure for remedying the grievances which demanded redress, as is to be found in the drawing of the above outline, and had their patriotic exertions been aided by the Parliament of England, Ireland might now be looked upon as a model of good government and happiness by those to whom she is only known by her misfortunes and crimes."

One of the principal founders of the House of Industry was Rev. Dr. Woodward, to whom I have already referred. Born in England, he owed his appointment in Ireland to that system of patronage, the abuses of which were "probably unparalleled in Europe" (Lecky, "Ireland in the Eighteenth Century," Vol. I, p. 204). Woodward, however, was an exception, and always evinced the most



enlightened regard for the welfare of the poor, irrespective of their professed religion, in the land of his adoption. He was ordained Dean of Clogher in 1764; Chancellor of St. Patrick's in 1772, and was consecrated Bishop of Cloyne in 1781. One of the provisions which he laid down in 1768, viz., "the indispensable duty of the rich to provide a competent maintenance for the poor," was embodied in the preamble of 11-12 Geo. III., c. 30, viz.: "It is just to call upon the humane and affluent to contribute to support of real objects of charity." In 1775 he published "An Address to the Public on the expediency of a Regular Plan for the Maintenance and Government of the Poor," in which he states that one of the immediate effects of the suppression of begging in Dublin was the failure of many of the low retailers of spirituous liquors. He also estimates that the gross number of beggars infesting the streets of Dublin was 2,000, and that their gains from begging amounted to £31,200 per annum. In 1782 he strenuously advocated in the Irish House of Lords, to which he had just been elevated, the entire repeal of the Penal Laws against the Roman Catholics.

In the following year, 1773, the House of Industry was established in Dublin, and, as will be seen from the above preamble, the Irish Legislature looked to voluntary effort for its support, and so did not make compulsory provision for relief. The voluntary contributions proved to be entirely insufficient, and Parliament was obliged in 1777 to vote a grant of £4,000 towards its support, and from that period annual grants were voted. The original object of the House of Industry was the suppression of mendicinity in Dublin, but as applicants were, from a very early period, admitted indiscriminately, it became a national rather than a local institution, and may be regarded as the Poor House for the greater part of Ireland. Two wards were opened in 1774 for the accommodation of medical and surgical patients, under the care of two physicians and two surgeons. In the year 1790 the Corporation for the Relief of the Poor elected a third physician and a third surgeon, and also a consulting physician and surgeon. As a corrective to the increasing cost of the institution, the dietary was reduced to 1800. This, however, did not accomplish the desired object, and in 1816 it was appropriated to (1) infirm and aged; (2) sick labouring under acute or chronic diseases; (3) orphan children; (4) idiots and lunatics. It thus became a great hospital for the reception of such paupers as came within the above-mentioned classes.

The history of the Foundling Hospital is so remarkable that I must point out some of the principal stages in its

development. When the workhouse was erected in Dublin in 1704, no child under the age of five could be admitted. In the Act of 1729 (3 Geo. II., c. 17), children could be admitted into the workhouse, irrespective of age, and in the following year "a cradle or turning wheel" was provided at the gate, so that infants could be taken in at any time, without inquiries being made. ("A Brief History of the Ancient Foundling Hospital of Dublin," by W. M. Wodsworth). In 1772 the children were separated from the vagabonds and strolling beggars, whose bad example might be injurious to the children. In 1773 (13-14 Geo. III., c. 17) it was enacted that no child above 3 years was to be admitted into the hospital (s. 1). In 1775 (15-16 Geo. III., c. 25), the age was limited to 12 months (s. 1). Henceforward the old workhouse, which now forms portion of the South Dublin Union in James's Street, became purely and simply a Foundling Hospital, and the children were badged with a seal, representing a female, with a distaff, "Industry," and the motto, "The diligent hand maketh rich."



As I have already stated, the Foundling Hospital was established in 1772, with the avowed object of separating the children from vagabonds and strolling beggars, whose bad example might be injurious to the children. The

development of that institution may be summarised in the words of the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws. (Report on Ireland, Cd. 4630).

"The Dublin Foundling Hospital gradually became one of the most gigantic baby-farming, nursing, boarding-out, and apprenticing institutions that these countries have ever seen. The objects of the institution were avowedly two-fold: firstly, to prevent the 'exposure, death, and actual murder of illegitimate children'; and secondly, to educate and rear children taken in charge of the institution 'in the Reformed or Protestant Faith, and thereby strengthen and promote the Protestant interest in Ireland.' Both these objects were, however, more or less frustrated by the operation of natural causes." Par. 274.

"The mismanagement of the Foundling Hospital became so notorious that a Committee of the House of Commons inquired into the matter on oath in 1797. It appears from their Report that, out of 12,768 children admitted in the six years ended 24th June, 1796, 9,786 had died; and 2,847 were unaccounted for. The management was 'reformed' under a new Act of Parliament in 1798." Par. 275.

A Select Committee on the Irish Miscellaneous Estimates, in a Report dated 19th June, 1829, recommended that, from and after 1st January, 1830, all further admissions to the Foundling Hospital should cease. The total Parliamentary grants during the thirty years ended 31st December, 1829, amounted to £787,682, or an average annual grant of over £26,000.

It is impossible to conceive a more scathing commentary on the prostitution of charity than that which the history of the Foundling Hospital reveals. The "management" seems to have acted in strict accordance with the motto which was inscribed on the Seal of the Institution. It recalls Swift's statement:

"Yet I confess I have known an hospital where all the household officers grew rich, while the poor, for whose sake it was built, were almost starving for want of food and raiment." ("A Short View of the State of Ireland," 1727).

"The training up and educating poor children as Protestants, and the repression of vagabondism, appear to be the objects chiefly sought to be attained by all these Acts of the Irish Parliament: and to these objects the relief of the infirm and destitute poor seem to be regarded as a matter altogether secondary and subordinate." (Nicholls' "History of the Irish Poor Laws," p. 50).

In 1804 a select committee of the House of Commons reported:—"That the adoption of a general system of provision for the poor of Ireland, by way of parish rate,

as in England, or in any similar manner, would be highly injurious to the country, and would not produce any real or permanent advantage, even to the lower classes of people who must be the objects of such support."

A Royal Commission—composed of men intimately acquainted with the Irish people, and having as their Chairman, Archbishop Whately—denounced the English system of poor relief as unsuited to Ireland, after a close investigation of the question extending from 1833 to 1836. When the Poor Relief (Ireland) Bill was before the House of Commons in 1838, eighty-six petitions, with 31,221 signatures, were presented against the bill, and four petitions, with 593 signatures, in favour of it. Every Grand Jury in Ireland, with one exception, had petitioned against it. Daniel O'Connell and Lord Castlereagh, for the first time, coincided in their views, and fought side by side in the House of Commons in opposing the bill. At a meeting in Belfast, presided over by Rev. Dr. Cooke, three cheers were given for O'Connell, who was present, and spoke against the bill (see Report of Vice-Regal Commission on Poor Law in Ireland, Cd. 3202, p. 12). Yet, in spite of the overwhelming expression of Irish opinion, the workhouse system, based and modelled upon the English system, was established in Ireland by the Poor Relief (Ireland) Act, 1838 (1 & 2 Vic., c. 56), which received the Royal Assent on 31st July, 1838.

On the passing of 1-2 Vic., c. 56, that portion of the House of Industry which comprised the asylum for the aged and infirm and the asylum for the lunatics, was appropriated by the Poor Law Commissioners as the Workhouse of the North Dublin Union, and opened for the destitute poor on 25th March, 1840. The Hospitals (viz., the Hardwicke Fever, erected in 1803; the Richmond Surgical, erected in 1811; and the Whitworth Medical, erected in 1818), were under the control of the Poor Law Commissioners, though supported by moneys voted by Parliament, under the direct management of a paid governor appointed by the Lord Lieutenant. Out of a Parliamentary grant to this institution of £11,859 per annum, the sum of £7,600 was expended on the three hospitals, and £4,259 on the workhouse.

## HOUSING OF THE POOR.

The problem of housing the poor in the City of Dublin is by no means a question of recent years, and, for the origin of the present deplorable conditions, we must look deeper than "the character and conduct of the Dublin

Corporation as at present constituted." For more than a century the dwellings of the poor have been far from satisfactory, and at a time when the Established Church was in full possession and enjoyment of its State emoluments, the lanes and alleys surrounding its numerous churches in Dublin were a living lie to the fundamental principles of Christianity.

I would ask your particular attention to the following picture of Dublin towards the end of the eighteenth century:—

In 1805 Rev. James Whitelaw, Vicar of St. Catherine's, published "An Essay on the Population of Dublin, being the result of an Actual Survey taken in 1798." At page 50 he says: "In the ancient parts of the city the streets are, with few exceptions generally narrow, the houses crowded together, and the reses or back yards of very small extent.

. . . A single apartment in one of these truly wretched habitations rates from 1s. to 2s. per week; and to lighten this rent, two, three, and even four families become joint tenants. As I was usually out at very early hours of the survey, I have frequently surprised from ten to sixteen persons, of all ages and sexes, in a room not fifteen feet square, stretched on a wad of filthy straw, swarming with vermin, and without any covering, save the wretched rags that constituted their wearing apparel. Under such circumstances, it is not extraordinary that I should have frequently found from 30 to 50 individuals in a house. . . . This crowded population, wherever it obtains, is almost universally accompanied by a very serious evil—a degree of filth and stench inconceivable except by such as have visited these scenes of wretchedness. . . . In the garret I found the entire family of a poor working shoemaker, seven in number, lying in a fever, without a human being to administer to their wants. . . . I counted in this sty 37 persons, and computed that its humane proprietor received out of an absolute ruin, which should be taken down by the magistrate as a public nuisance, a profit rent of above £30 per annum, with unfeeling severity. . . . I am certain that every friend to decency and cleanliness, every person who is anxious to promote the comforts of the poor, will join in my opinion that a police which attends to our streets and lanes only, and that but partially, while it never bestows a thought on the back yards of the poor, performs only one half its duty; the more essential part, perhaps, is neglected. . . . In July, 1798, the entire side of a house, four stories high, in Schoolhouse Lane, fell from its foundations into an adjoining yard, where it destroyed an entire dairy of cows. I ascended the remaining ruin through the usual approach of shattered

stairs, stench, and filth. The floor had all sunk on the side now unsupported, forming so many inclined planes; and I observed, with astonishment, that the inhabitants, above 30 in number, who had escaped destruction from the circumstances of the wall falling outwards, had not deserted their apartments; I was informed that it had remained some months in this situation, and that the humane landlord claimed, and actually received, for it the usual rent."

We sometimes have a comparison drawn between Dublin and Belfast as to their relative proportion of pauperism, and the conditions under which the poor are housed in the two cities. But the consideration of this question has, unfortunately, become so intermingled with religious prejudices and political feelings that the most monstrous and absurd theories are often advanced. In order to draw an impartial comparison we must not overlook the past history of the two cities. At the close of the 18th century, Dublin was one of the largest and most populous cities in the United Kingdom; while Belfast had a population of 18,320 in 1791. Immediately after the Act of Union, Dublin ceased to be a metropolis for the wealthy, but it continued to be a metropolis as regards the poor, and, to a very large extent, it has remained so since. According to the First Annual Report of Commissioners of Irish Poor Laws, dated 1st May, 1848: "The number of persons who received gratuitous rations (under Temporary Relief Act) on 4th July, 1847, is shown by the returns to have been in North Dublin Union, 27,734, and in South Dublin Union, 29,775; and the proportion of these persons classed as able-bodied amounted, together with their families, in North Dublin Union to 21,466, and in South Dublin Union to 24,066" (p. 5).

Dublin resembles very much the elder brother whose inheritance is encumbered estates—the result of past profligacy, corruption, and extravagance—which are not sufficient to keep up the family dignity. Belfast, on the other hand, resembles the younger brother, whose inheritance is somewhat similar to that which is said to be the Kerryman's fortune, viz., a map of the world, and a kick from behind.

Coming down to more recent years, Mr. Nugent Robinson, City Hall, Dublin, says, in 1861: "The dwellings of the poor in Dublin may be justly termed a 'disgrace to modern civilization.' . . . These places are like so many hotbeds, from whence all diseases are transplanted into our hospitals. The number of tenements, that is, of houses let out in rooms within the municipal boundary, is close upon 8,000, or better than one-third of the total number

of houses in the entire city. As the large majority of these are overcrowded, we may safely venture upon the average of eight persons to each house, which gives us 64,000 people out of a population of 249,733—50,000, at least, of whom reside in a fetid and poisonous atmosphere. The dwellings of the poor are chiefly confined to about 450 lanes, courts, and alleys, and about 60 streets. I have taken 134 of the worst streets and alleys, and the following are the results, as near as I could gauge them. In these 134 streets there are 2,102 houses occupied by room-keepers; 11,214 rooms; 14,850 beds, including wads of straw, and 40,310 persons."

"There is a class of people in this city called 'house-jobbers.' To this community the wretchedness of the dwellings of our poor is mainly owing. They buy up dilapidated houses and re-let them, either by the house or by the room. As a general rule, the 'jobber' remains behind the scenes, while the actor is some low brutish agent employed on commission to collect the rents by hook or by crook. The 'jobbers' are utterly averse to ameliorating the condition of their tenants when anything in the shape of expense is liable to be incurred. It is to be regretted that many men of social position belong to this class." (Transactions of the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science, 1861).

Mr. Henry J. P. MacLean, Chairman of the Public Health Committee of the Corporation of Dublin, estimated that in 1867 there were 9,000 tenements in Dublin, let at weekly rents not exceeding 3s., in which resided 27,000 families, or more than one-third of the population. He says:—"There are in Dublin 1,295 houses occupied by 3,258 families, without space whereon to construct any sanitary conveniences: that of these 635 houses (occupied by 1,598 families) are wholly unprovided with any sanitary accommodation; and that 660 houses, occupied by 1,670 families, are but jointly provided with such accommodation, which does not, however, stand upon their own premises." (Transactions of the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science, 1867).

In 1879 a Royal Commission was appointed, consisting of Sir Robert Rawlinson and Sir Francis MacCabe, "to inquire into the system of sewerage and drainage in the City of Dublin, in so far as such sewerage and drainage affected the sanitary condition of the city, and the state of the river Liffey flowing therein, and also to inquire whether such system was directly or indirectly prejudicial to the public health."

The Report (C. 2605), which was published in June, 1880, contains the following interesting facts:—

“The City of Dublin, in 1879, contained 23,830 houses; of these, 9,760 were occupied as dwellings let in tenements, and it appears from the evidence of the executive sanitary officer, that of houses of this description occupied by more than one family, 2,300, containing an estimated population of 30,000 persons, are in a condition which renders them unfit for human habitation, and some are not worth the expenditure which would be necessary in order to place them in a proper state, and to provide the requisite sanitary appliances” (p. 20).

“Under existing conditions it frequently happens that each room is occupied by a family, and, as far as can be ascertained, it would appear that about 117,000 of the population of Dublin are thus lodged. The average number of persons in each tenement house is stated to be from 10 to 12, but this number is frequently exceeded, so that excessive overcrowding is the rule. The occupants have to resort to one ashpit, placed in a yard, and, if there is a privy, it is utterly unfit for use.”

“Amongst the several sanitary defects of the City of Dublin, the condition of the tenement houses is, perhaps, the most pressing, and is certainly the most difficult to be dealt with” (p. 21).

“There are said to be about 1,100 tenement houses owned by five persons, who are not absenteees, but who reside in the district for the purpose of receiving the rents. If these 1,100 tenement houses only yield £5 per annum each, there will be £5,500 per annum for these five owners, or at a rate of about £1,100 each. The great blot in Dublin, all admit, is caused by these tenement houses, and the peculiarity is that they are not confined to narrow streets and poor localities, but are to be found in all parts of the city.”

“The history of a modern tenement house fully told might be as interesting as a passage in a novel, and its gradual degradation shown to be as terrible as a tragedy.”

“The degradation of houses is, it is now clearly shown, at the root of most of the excess of disease to be found in Dublin. It is not defective sewerage, defective paving, defective street scavenging, or in the polluted state of the river Liffey, so much as in these horrible room tenements, which exist to the direct injury of more than 100,000 of the poor inhabitants, and at the indirect charge and direct money loss of the entire community. The poor people who overcrowd these tenements, and pay the pittance of 6d. or 1s. 6d. per week for their room, buy misery very dearly, in loss of wages through sickness and suffering.”



"The room tenements of Dublin, being the great sanitary sore of the city, we say that, until these places of residence are improved in some practicable and effective manner, there will be no hope or prospect of bringing the death-rate of Dublin to a moderate standard" (p. 22).

"The seats of the greatest amount of disease are to be found in the tenement houses and their surroundings."

"The last class of tenement houses comprises those described by the executive sanitary officer in his evidence as totally unfit for human habitation, and intrinsically not worth the cost of improvement. With regard to these, the duty of the Sanitary Authority is clear—the decision to close such houses admits principle of no hesitation" (p. 23).

"We have come to the following conclusions:—

"That the tenement houses of Dublin, according to the medical evidence so voluminously tendered at our inquiry, and embodied in this our Report, appear to be the prime source and cause of the excessively high death-rate. That they are not properly classified, registered, and regulated; that they are dilapidated, dirty ill-ventilated, much overcrowded, and that disease, a craving for stimulants and its consequences—drunkenness and extreme poverty—are thereby fostered, and that, until the condition of these houses shall have been improved, the general health of the city will continue to be injuriously affected."

"That most of the courts and yards in connection with tenement houses are unformed and unpaved, and that, as a consequence, there is an accumulation of offensive dirt, general discomfort, loss of health, and loss of power to earn wages" (p. 29).

"We further recommend that the entire scavenging of Dublin, both public and domestic, be undertaken, and carried out by the Corporation" (p. 31).

In 1885 a Royal Commission, appointed to inquire into the Housing of the Working Classes, issued their Third Report (C. 4547), which deals with Ireland, and contains the following:—

"Notwithstanding the energetic action of the corporation and of private persons and of societies, the condition of things in Dublin is very far from satisfactory. It is said that the great improvement which has taken place in some quarters is counterbalanced by the deterioration which is found in other districts. The evil of tenement houses exists very extensively in Dublin" (p. 6).

Statistics show no sensible diminution of the general

death-rate. Sir Charles Cameron accounts for this by the general poverty of the people and their badly-fed condition, which is well described in the words of a memorandum by Mr. Wodsworth, Secretary to the Local Government Board, in which he says:—"It is a mistake, however, to conclude that the high death-rate in towns is attributable solely to the dwellings of the poor classes. It is due to other causes also. It is mainly attributable to the deteriorated constitutions of the population, a deterioration which is the result of inferior and insufficient food, poor clothing, and misery generally for generations, resulting in sickly, feeble, and strumous conditions of body, rendering the poor people obnoxious (to use a medical word) to disease, and unable successfully to resist its inroads and consequences. Sir Charles Cameron says there is not a more under-fed population in the United Kingdom than the working-classes of Dublin" (p. 7).

That the state of things is still far from satisfactory is shown by the fact that the death-rate of Dublin is still high, and is not decreasing.

"Overcrowding undoubtedly does exist to a very great extent in Dublin, as may be gathered from the following figures: 32,000 families out of the total of 54,000 residing in Dublin inhabit 7,200 houses out of a total of 24,000. No matter what the size of a room is, there is no doubt but that it is in the highest degree unhealthy for half-a-dozen persons to perform all the functions of life in the same apartment, as is frequently the case in Dublin" (p. 7).

In February, 1900, the Local Government Board of Ireland, acting under the provision of Section 209 of the Public Health (Ireland) Act, 1878, appointed a Committee, consisting of Charles P. Cotton, Esq., the Board's Chief Engineering Inspector (Chairman), Right Hon. Joseph M. Meade, Sir John William Moore, R. L. Swan, Esq., F.R.C.S.; Dr. Theodore Thompson, Medical Inspector, L.G.B., England; and Alderman P. Dowd,

"to inquire and report to them as to (1) the cause of the high death-rate in Dublin, and (2) the measures which, in their opinion, should be adopted with the view of improving the health of the city."

The Report (Cd. 243) was presented on 14th May, 1900, and contains the following:—

"The average density of the population in Dublin, as ascertained by dividing the population (according to the Census Return of 1891) by the number of statute acres

appears to be 65.6 per acre. The Registrar-General stated that he found this to vary in the eight registration districts from 46.2 persons per acre to 124.4 persons per acre. These figures cannot be relied on to any great degree of exactitude" (p. 7).

"The facts which came to the knowledge of the Committee clearly establish the existence in Dublin, in an exceptional degree, of several conditions which are wont to be associated with a high rate of mortality. Especially noteworthy among these are the insanitary circumstances in which a considerable proportion of the population of Dublin lives. It has to be borne in mind that the proportional amount of poverty in Dublin is very large, so that these unfavourable conditions associated with the houses of the poor are widely spread throughout the city. The poverty of much of the population of Dublin is, in itself, apart from the insanitary conditions referred to, a serious factor in the high death-rate of the city. The concomitants of poverty, more especially insufficient and unsuitable food and scanty clothing, both directly and indirectly, exert a marked influence upon the death-rate" (pp. 9-10).

"Any improvements in these numerous and widely scattered insanitary dwellings (tenement houses) must react favourably on the health of Dublin" (p. 11).

"It appears from the evidence that, in some cases, the letting of stables as dwellings is attended with bad results, and we think that the Sanitary Authority should have direct control in this matter" (p. 12).

A large number of lanes and alleys in Dublin had not been scavenged by the Corporation prior to the present year, when, however, on the suggestion of the Local Government Board, this work was immediately taken in hand by the Corporation, and is now being carried out. The failure of the Corporation, until recently, to scavenge these lanes and alleys, would appear to have been due to the fact that they have not taken them "in charge," so that many of them are very defective as regards sewerage and paving. It is clearly in the interests of the public health that all streets, lanes and alleys in the city, whether in charge of the Corporation or not, should be scavenged by them. This measure would be facilitated by the sewerage, levelling and paving of these streets, lanes, and alleys, where necessary; works which the Corporation are empowered to compel owners to carry out, by section 28 of the Public Health (Ireland) Act, 1878.

The Committee recommended:—

"That in 'tenement houses,' water should be laid on to each floor, and separate sanitary accommodation should be provided for at least every two families.

"That no stables should be let as dwellings without a license having been first obtained from the Corporation

"That schemes for housing a large number of the labouring and poorer classes should be taken in hand at once, and, if suitable sites cannot be obtained in the city, powers should be given to the Corporation to acquire sites outside the city, whereon the buildings can be erected. Those blocks of buildings should be erected before any further clearances of areas be carried out.

"That all streets, lanes, and alleys in the city, whether in charge of the Corporation or not, should be scavenged by them.

"That all dust bins be covered and emptied into covered carts, and that the contents of dust bins from tenement houses be collected daily" (p. 16).

On 30th November, 1906, Surgeon-Colonel D. Edgar Flinn, F.R.C.S., D.P.H., Medical Inspector to the Local Government Board, Ireland, issued a Report on the Sanitary Circumstances and Administration of the City of Dublin, with Special Reference to the Causes of the High Death-rate. That Report contains the following statements:—

"The tenement house system, which prevails so generally in Dublin, is responsible for largely aiding in the conditions associated with a high rate of mortality."

The rent paid for tenement rooms in Dublin is excessive, having regard to the accommodation afforded.

"The institution of an inspection of the tenement houses in the *poorer and more congested areas in the city*, with a view to obtaining a record of the number of rooms and the measurements and cubic capacity of each, would be of very great benefit, and should effectually assist in the prevention of overcrowding. The particulars and measurements taken should be registered, and tenement house-owners furnished with a copy setting forth the number of persons that should occupy each room. These particulars should also be posted in a prominent position in each tenement house. This is a question that should engage the earnest attentions of the Public Health Committee."

"The tenement house question is one of ever-pressing urgency, as the habits and insanitary surroundings of the tenement dwellers play a large part in influencing the prevalence of disease."

"One of the recommendations of the Committee appointed in 1900, that in tenement houses water should be laid on to each floor and separate sanitary accommodation should be provided for at least every two families,

has, I regret to say, not been acted upon. The absence of ample sanitary accommodation in the tenement houses occupied by more than two families tends to engender filthy habits. The residents in such houses do not always take the trouble to avail themselves of the accommodation afforded in the backyards, the result being that the landings and staircases are often in a filthy condition."

"The wages earned by the average labourer in Dublin is inadequate to maintain a family in a state of physical efficiency. Lack of employment, lowness of wages, as well as other economic causes, account for the poverty observable in many quarters of the city. . . . Being the capital, Dublin is the magnet which draws the unemployed and unemployable, as well as unskilled, from all parts of the country. . . . Being both badly clothed and nourished, they soon become a prey to disease."

"The sanitary surroundings and circumstances of stables used as dwellings are not suitable to the bringing up of children of tender years. Power should certainly be obtained to prevent the conversion of stables into dwellings. In the majority of instances the sleeping-rooms are situated directly over the stables, a practice that cannot be too strongly condemned. Although no stables are in future to be permitted to be used as dwellings, efforts should be made to decrease or abolish the large number of such places that still exist throughout the city, and that are still used as dwellings."

"It is quite clear that the chief causes which contribute to the high death-rate in Dublin are: (1) poverty with its attendant evils; (2) tuberculous disease; (3) intemperance; (4) insanitary conditions under which the poorer classes live; (5) overcrowding; (6) want of knowledge in the feeding and care of infants."

"The Committee in 1900 recommended that not only should water be laid on to each floor, but that separate sanitary accommodation should be provided for at least every two families. I regard this recommendation as vitally important, and, from a health point of view, absolutely necessary."

"In order to prevent overcrowding in tenement houses, and to limit the number of persons residing in them, some system of registration should be adopted whereby the number of rooms in each tenement house, and the measurements, and cubic capacity of each room, could be ascertained, and a register kept recording these details. A system such as this would tend to check the overcrowding of families in tenement houses."

“PROPERTY HAS ITS DUTIES AS WELL AS ITS RIGHTS.”

In a prominent position in the City Hall stands a statue of Thomas Drummond, erected in 1843, on the pedestal of which are inscribed the above words. Let us for a moment examine as to how far the City Corporation has acted in conformity with the sentiment contained in those words. The Public Health Committee was constituted on 24th August, 1866. Since 1879 they have had the assistance of one of the ablest Medical Health Officers in the United Kingdom—Sir Charles Cameron, C.B., M.D. His Annual Health Reports are a worthy memorial to his indefatigable skill in pointing out the weak points of the health regulations, and, at the same time, to his deep interest in the welfare of the community, of which he is so worthy and honoured a servant. Here is what he says in 1909:—“There are 900 streets, lanes, alleys, courts, passages, and open yards not in charge of the Corporation. Placed one after the other, they would extend to a distance of thirty miles—from Dublin to Drogheda, for an illustration. The dwellings in these lanes are occupied by about 12,000 persons. . . . That the public health is affected injuriously by the existence of thirty miles of roadway, which, in general, is in a filthy state, I have no doubt whatever.” Surely, such a state of affairs seems a scandal, especially as the Royal Commission, thirty years previously, recommended “that the entire scavenging of Dublin, both public and domestic, be undertaken and carried out by the Corporation.” To the ordinary individual this would seem to be a clear instance of where the principle of the duties of property could be very advantageously applied.

In the Health Report for 1891 there appears at page 772: “I printed and submitted a report which will be found in Printed Papers 33/91, explaining the provisions of Public Health Acts Amendment Act, 1890, and recommending its adoption. . . . The following is the passage:—The adoption of this section (27) would enable the Corporation to deal with the cases of many lanes which are now in a very insanitary state. It is extremely difficult to deal with the case of a lane not in charge of the Corporation, and not in a good state with regard to roadway and drainage: it is often the repository of all kinds of filth, causing nuisances injurious to health, and it is difficult and often impossible to discover who are responsible for the deposition of the filth. In many cases it would be sufficient to cleanse these lanes, in most of which there is but little traffic. At present they cannot be cleansed by

the Corporation until they are taken in charge, which means that they must be paved, drained and provided with lamps at a cost which, in some cases, would amount to hundreds of pounds. I find that there are on the north side of the city 75, and on the south side of the city 105 lanes and courts not in charge of the Corporation. . . . I may say that there is probably not a lane in Dublin that is properly cleaned; and I am of opinion that the Corporation should have them regularly scavenged under the provisions of the above Act.”

I am quite aware that difficulties are sometimes thrown in the way of the Corporation, and, as an illustration, I would quote Sir Charles Cameron's evidence in 1900:—

“The Public Health Committee have power to cleanse private places, and to charge the cost of the cleaning against the owners of the property abutting. Well, the Cleansing Committee agreed, and the one great case was against Trinity College. There is a long lane there, parallel with Brunswick Street, running from McKenzie's building nearly to the railway station at Westland Row. On the one side is the College Wall, and on the other the blocks of houses of Brunswick Street, south side. The Corporation cleaned this, and then required the College authorities to pay half costs. But they fought it out in the Courts—the Corporation lost. The College people said they had no door leading out on the lane.”

In the Health Report for 1891 there is a list of “Lanes not in charge of the Corporation,” and at page 96 there appears, “College Lane, rear of Great Brunswick Street—Condition of Lane, bad.” I have recently, upon several occasions, visited this lane, and on each occasion found it in a disgraceful condition. Why a wealthy body like Trinity College, Dublin, should permit a lane to be in such a condition, in close proximity to the students' quarters, it is difficult to imagine. I would suggest that “The Dublin University Social Service Society,” whose object is the study of social and economic problems from the standpoint of practical Christianity, would concentrate their attention on College Lane, with a view to having it properly cleansed.

Another aspect of the tenement houses is that, while there is an ever-increasing expenditure on their inspection and regulation, the rates payable in respect of such property is vastly out of proportion to the rents received.

Prior to 1866 there was one inspector of nuisances in Dublin, who had other offices of a completely different character to perform. Shortly after the Public Health Committee was constituted in 1866, there were appointed

eight sanitary sergeants, *i.e.*, members of the Metropolitan Police, who received from the Treasury a moiety of their salary. This number was added to as follows:—

In 1884, an Inspector, 8 Police, 12 civilians				
In 1891	"	8	"	16
In 1903	"	1	"	30
In 1912	"	0	"	35

I am not in a position to say what the increased cost of inspection amounts to, but that it must be considerable may be seen from the following expense of providing uniforms for sanitary officers. In 1884 it amounted to £84, *i.e.*, 12 uniforms at £7. In 1904 it had increased to £250, and in 1912 to £350. The expenditure estimated for 1911-1912 under the head of Sanitary Inspection was: Salaries and Wages £5,540, and Uniforms £350.

The Medical Officer of Health has stated that "By far the larger part of the department consists in the inspection of tenement houses." Now how do the owners of these tenement houses contribute to the extra expense entailed by reason of the existence of such houses? In the Annual Report for 1903, page 108, it is stated that in Church Street there are 74 tenement houses which accommodate 370 families. The total yearly rent amounts to £2,365, and the total valuation to £857 10s., or 27·5 per cent. Such a state of affairs acts as a premium on the creation of tenement houses, and is entirely antagonistic to the principle of the duties of property.

The following are a few extracts from the Annual Health Reports in reference to tenement houses:—

"In 1881 there were 24,211 inhabited houses in Dublin. In 1882 I had a survey of these houses made, the results of which showed that there resided in 7,234 of them no fewer than 32,202 of the 54,725 families living in Dublin. The houses contained 48,116 rooms. . . . According to the law 300 cubic feet of space must be provided for every person; but still a man and his wife and 3 children may legally reside in a room 15 feet long, 10 feet wide, and 10 feet high" (1884, p. 441).

"Nearly two-thirds of the inhabitants of Dublin dwell in crowded tenement houses, very old, decayed and built originally for one family. These old houses require constant inspection and constant repair, and in order to compel the majority of owners to do their duty and maintain these houses in a decent condition and fit for human habitation, the staff allowed to the Public Health Department are constantly and systematically at work. In the year 1891



over 31,930 sanitary defects were discovered in Dublin with a population of 245,000 and 30,221 in 1890. We may compare this with:

1,880	defects discovered in	Sheffield	with	320,000	pop.
1,000	"	"	"	Bolton	" 115,000 "
3,162	"	"	"	N'tingham	" 212,000 "

The average yearly number of convictions before magistrates for breaches of sanitary laws in Dublin is about 3,000. There is now, and always will remain, a great amount of work to be done in order to regulate properly the large number of tenement houses in Dublin" (p. 763).

"By far the larger part of the Department consists in the inspection of tenement houses. There are 5,197 registered houses in the city. These houses contain 38,993 habitable rooms, affording accommodation for 26,057 families, consisting of 92,818 persons" (1891, p. 389).

"During the last dozen years, 2,700 of the 8,000 houses, in which 60 per cent. of the inhabitants of Dublin resided, have been detenanted and closed by Magistrates' Orders, obtained by the sanitary authorities. . . . Of the 4,300 houses which were never closed, very few have not been subjected to notices to have nuisances and defects in them abated and remedied" (1893, p. 85).

#### CHANGES IN THE LAW REQUIRED.

There is one matter upon which Sir Charles Cameron has been most persistent, and that is an amendment of the law to meet the requirements of local circumstances. In his evidence before the Committee of 1900, Sir Charles said: "We want urgently a change in the law (section 21 of Public Health Acts Amendment Act, 1890), with respect to this matter, which, I think, has something to do with the death rate. This matter is so important to the sanitation of the tenement houses of Dublin that I wish to call the special attention of the Committee to the point. If two families occupy each of them one house with a yard in common, they come under the provisions of the 21st section of the Public Health Acts Amendment Act of 1890; but if there are 16 families living in one house, and having sanitary accommodation in common, they do not come under it. . . . On a case being stated to the Court of Queen's Bench, it was held that the section did not apply to one house occupied by several families." (Smith *v.* Caffrey, 33 I.L.T.R. 142).

"Some houses in the city are now occupied by up to 20 families, having sanitary accommodation in common. In

the vast majority of tenement houses in Dublin each house has its sanitary accommodation, and there the tenant cannot be got at. We want an amendment of the law."

"A very curious state of things appears to exist in Dublin—that nuisances in individual rooms cannot be dealt with in the existing state of the law. The way the matter stands is that, no matter what state of filth we see in a room we cannot deal with it. I contend that in the case of any nuisance injurious to health, without any particular definition or distinction, it ought to be abated. Anything that is a nuisance should be abated."

"Mr. Wall decided, under section 2 of the Public Health Act, that 'premises' would not mean a single room in a tenement house, so that at present we are not able to deal with the insanitary state of individual rooms."

"A very large number of houses in Dublin are owned by persons in very high positions in society. Noblemen and gentlemen who do not live in Dublin at all own houses, let either yearly or on leases to persons who farm them out to the tenement class, and many owners of these houses care very little about them, or the persons to whom they let them. I am speaking of a gigantic state of affairs in Dublin—of hundreds and hundreds of houses . . . . If the owner of the house is in a good position we can get at him, and make him do the necessary improvements, and that is what we are calling on owners of houses to do every day. But if the person who rents the house does not live in it himself, but lets it to other persons, then he gets the rack rent and is liable, but, as a rule, he has no means to put the house into proper order. We cannot get the real owner of the house, because he is not the immediate rack-renter. The law requires urgent amendment. . . . This is an evil of great magnitude in Dublin, and ought to be remedied."

"My friend, the Recorder of Dublin, and I have had conversations, and he agrees that the expense of reconstructing sanitary accommodation and paying for the improved drainage should be distributed as it is in England—distributed *pro rata* on all persons who derive the benefit."

In the Public Health Report for 1905 there is an article entitled, "Legislation required to Improve the Sanitation of Dublin," in which Sir Charles Cameron says, at p. 66: "The powers which the Corporation possess are not sufficient to deal with the many causes of the high death-rate. An Improvement Act mainly dealing with sanitary matters is urgently required, and, I trust, will soon be asked for."

I venture to suggest some additional powers, which, if granted, would, if employed, substantially aid in improving the sanitary conditions of Dublin.

"To make the occupiers of each tenement house responsible for the condition of their sanitary accommodation in the same way that the Public Health Act holds the occupiers of two or more houses having sanitary accommodation in common.

"To make bye-laws enforcing cleanliness by the occupiers of tenement houses, but still keeping in existing bye-laws the same power as regards landlords.

"To prevent persons using any house as a tenement house without first applying for permission to the sanitary authority; who would then have the house inspected to ascertain whether or not it was suited for such purpose, and, if so, what alterations were necessary in consequence of its altered conditions.

"Power to deal with derelict spaces and ruinous houses, acquiring those derelict for twenty years without compensation to the owners, whose property has been neglected for shorter periods.

"Power to build houses on derelict spaces and to dispose of them under the provisions of the Small Dwellings Acquisition Act, or otherwise, or to let them."

Again, in Public Health Report for 1909, Sir Charles Cameron says, in an article entitled, "What is required to improve the Public Health in Dublin":—" (1) A considerable extension of the provision of healthy dwellings for the working classes, and especially of the very poor ones. (2) The regular cleansing of the hundreds of streets, lanes, courts, etc., not in charge of the Corporation. (3) The medical inspection of school children, and power to provide meals for those found to be insufficiently fed. (4) Provision for the housing of poor consumptives still at work, and of those unfit to labour. (5) The efficient carrying out of the objects of the Early Notification of Births Act and of the Tuberculosis Prevention Act. (6) Legislation to enable the Corporation to make Bye-laws for the better regulation of tenement houses, which, under the present Public Health Acts, would be considered *ultra vires*."

#### SOME CONSEQUENCES OF INSANITARY DWELLINGS.

The miserable and insanitary dwellings in which a large number of the population are housed may be regarded as a gigantic factory for the production of criminals to fill our gaols; of paupers to be supported at the expense of the

public rates; and of sick patients to be nursed and medically treated in the numerous hospitals, for the support of which constant appeals are being made to a charitable and generous public.

One of our leading physicians, Sir John Moore, M.D., has stated:—"Intemperate habits are engendered in a man who, if he had lived under proper sanitary conditions, would perhaps never have been induced to make free use of alcohol. Drunkenness again, by producing poverty and carelessness, further promotes insanitary conditions: thus drunkenness and insanitary conditions react on one another, each producing the other. Comfortable dwellings will do more to promote sobriety than any amount of legislation and teetotal agitation." (*Manual of Public Health for Ireland*, 1875).

For a better understanding of this important statement, I would ask attention to the following statistics. For the four divisions of the Dublin Metropolitan Police District, which practically corresponds to the city boundaries, there are 678 licensed houses for consumption on the premises, and 241 licensed houses for consumption off the premises. Of this total of 919 licensed houses, 760 are open for sale of liquor on Sunday. For the same year (1911) there were 1,913 arrests for drunkenness, and 944 for drunk and disorderly. There were 3,429 indictable offences, and 27,050 non-indictable offences committed within the Metropolitan Police District.

The number of paupers, according to the census of 1911, was 9,617, of which 5,602 were in the workhouses, or one to every 32 of the population. The number of lunatics and idiots in asylums was 1,891, of which 1,139, or 36 per cent. of the population were received from the city, while the number of prisoners in Mountjoy Prison, received from the city, was 294. (*Table XII., Cd. 6049-II.*)

In the Annual Public Health Report for 1903, there is a most interesting article on "How the Poor Live," from which I take the following:—"In 1903, 39.7 per cent. of the deaths—not merely in the city, but in the whole metropolis—took place in the workhouses, hospitals, lunatic asylums, and prisons. Out of a total of 9,047 deaths in the year, 1,168 occurred in the workhouses. . . . In Dublin nearly two-fifths of the families occupy single rooms" (p. 100).

"The number of articles pawned in Dublin is very large. From inquiries which I made some years ago, I ascertained that, in a single year, 2,866,084 tickets were issued in the City of Dublin, and the loans to which they referred amounted to £547,453, or at the rate of £2 4s. od. per head of the population" (p. 102).

But of all the consequences to insanitary dwellings, perhaps the most disastrous is the destruction of child life.

"These dirty houses pay the tax to death  
In babies' lives."<sup>1</sup>

But, apart from the actual physical destruction, the moral destruction is very far-reaching. I have already pointed out that, "of all those innumerable elements that act and react on the vital organization of a nation, there is none more important than the proper training of its youthful members, so as to secure the healthy development of their moral natures."

("The Duty of the State in relation to the Pauper Children," *Journal*, Vol. XII., p. 250).

The Corporation of Dublin was one of the earliest local authorities to adopt the provisions of the Employment of Children Act, 1903, and to frame bye-laws for the purpose of regulating street-trading by persons under the age of 16. One of those bye-laws was: "In case of a boy or girl seeking or holding a license having no home, or no proper home, the Corporation shall be empowered to require, as a condition of a license to trade being granted, that he or she reside in lodgings approved of by the Corporation." As Mr. J. R. O'Connell, LL.D., has pointed out to this society, "this regulation has been entirely ignored, and no attempt has been made to provide lodging-houses, or to inspect those to which the juvenile street traders habitually resort." (*Journal*, 28th April, 1911).

The great problem of housing, which, as I have shown, dates back to the eighteenth century, retards many useful reforms, and none more urgently required in our midst than the establishment of a Day Industrial School. The Philanthropic Reform Association has been most persistent in urging on the Corporation the necessity of such a school being established, and has succeeded in getting the Estates and Finance Committee of the Dublin Corporation to make the following recommendation:—"After careful consideration, however, of all the information placed before us, we are of opinion, and so recommend, that the Council should agree to make a contribution of 2s. per head per week in respect of children received into certified Day Industrial Schools up to a limit of 100, provided that, in addition, a Treasury grant of 1s. per child per week was also obtained."

This recommendation was made over two years ago, and the Corporation has made no further move, although the matter is of paramount importance, as a means of

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<sup>1</sup> "Home in Dublin," by W. M. Letts.

preventing some of those unfortunate children who daily crowd our streets from becoming habitual criminals, and thus a burden on the community at large.

I do not believe—and I say it with the most profound and sincere regret—I do not believe that, in any Christian country within His Majesty's dominions, there are to be found such shocking and demoralized social phenomena as we have at present in the City of Dublin. Yet I am hopeful, and I trust I ever shall be, that the great fundamental principle of Christianity—"Love ye one another"—will yet triumph over the selfishness and avarice of individuals; and that, by an united effort of the citizens, irrespective of party or creed, the Herculean task of cleansing the Augean Stables of slumland will be carried to a successful issue. For the realization of that much-desired end, we want a more enlightened public opinion as to the conditions in which the working classes are housed, and the temptations to which they are at present exposed. If my paper has in any way thrown a ray of light on the problem, or if it will act as a stimulus to a deeper study of the question with a view to a successful solution, I shall feel amply rewarded for bringing before your notice much of what I fear has long since been lost to public view.

I shall conclude with the memorable words which Thomas Drummond wrote to the Tipperary Magistrates in 1838:—

"Property has its duties as well as its rights; to the neglect of those duties in times past is mainly to be ascribed that diseased state of society in which such crimes take their rise; and it is not in the enactment or enforcement of statutes of extraordinary severity, but chiefly in the better and more faithful performance of those duties, and the more enlightened and humane exercise of those rights, that a permanent remedy for such disorders is to be sought."