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DWELLINGS  
OF  
THE LABOURING CLASSES  
IN  
THE METROPOLIS.

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## DWELLINGS

OF

## THE LABOURING CLASSES.

THE increasing attention given of late years to every thing calculated to promote the well-being of the labouring classes, has led to no efforts more practical or useful than those directed towards the improvement of their dwellings.

Town, and country, have alike participated in this movement. The agricultural labourer has in many localities felt its benefit; in some cases individual landowners, in others, Societies having pointed out and led the way. But it is the inhabitant of towns who has been the chief object of these endeavours, at once benevolent and enlightened. Numerous publications, the titles of which are given below,\* exhibit

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\* Healthy Homes. Reports of a Public Meeting to consider the best Method of extending the Operations of the Metropolitan Association for Improving the Dwellings of the Industrious Classes. 1854.

The Labourer's Friend, for disseminating Information on the Means of Improving the Condition of the Labouring Classes. 1844 to 1856.

Report on the Common and Model Lodging-Houses of the Metropolis, with reference to Epidemic Cholera in 1854. By George Glover. Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of Her Majesty. 1855.

Results of Sanitary Improvement, illustrated by the Operation of the Metropolitan Societies for Improving the Dwellings of the Industrious Classes, the working of the Common Lodging-Houses Act, etc. By Southwood Smith, M.D. 1854.

Reports relating to the Sanitary Condition of London. By John Simon, F.R.S. 1854, 1855.

the extent of these efforts, and from some among them it may be made clear, that the foundation for a thorough change in the interior arrangement of the dwellings for the poor in our large towns, has been laid by those persons, who have associated themselves together for the purpose of helping the industrious classes, in this matter of such importance to their moral well-being and their physical comfort.

The publications which have been alluded to abound with descriptions of the wretched condition of the dwellings of the labouring classes, especially in the Metropolis, before the breaking out of the cholera in 1849. A short extract from one of these publications will be sufficient to show the nature of this social evil, and the extent to which the overcrowding in common lodging-houses, and the utter disregard of all the decencies of life, existed so recently as the year 1850, when Mr. Simon, in his first

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A Practical View of the Sanitary Question. Being the General Report of the Proceedings of the Local Board of Health for the Parochial District of Regent-square Church, St. Pancras.

Plans and Descriptions of the Model Dwellings in London erected by the Society for Improving the Condition of the Labouring Classes.

Essay on the Dwellings of the Labouring Classes. By Henry Roberts, F.S.A. With Plans and Illustrations. 1853.

The Twelfth Annual Report of the Society for Improving the Condition of the Labouring Classes. 1856.

The Twelfth Annual Report of the Directors of the Metropolitan Association for Improving the Dwellings of the Industrious Classes. 1856.

The Fourth Annual Report of the Windsor Royal Society for encouraging and providing better Domestic Accommodation for the Industrial Classes. 1856.

The Second Report of the Directors of the Marylebone Association for Improving the Dwellings of the Industrious Classes. 1856.

Report of the Committee appointed to inquire into the appropriation of the Site of Smithfield. Presented to both Houses of Parliament 20th July, 1856.

"The Sanitary State of Town Dwellings," in the Companion to the Almanack, or Year-Book of General Information, for 1855.

and second reports on the sanitary state of the city of London, wrote thus:—

“ Courts and alleys, with low, dark, filthy tenements, hemmed in on all sides by higher buildings, having no possibility of any current of air, and (worst of all) sometimes so constructed back to back, as to forbid the advantage of double windows, or back doors, and thus to render the house as perfect a cul-de-sac out of the court, as the court is a cul-de-sac out of the next throughfare. I affirmed that this could never be otherwise than a cause of sickness and mortality to those whose necessities allot them such residence, and assured you of the incontrovertible fact, that subsistence in closed courts is an unhealthy and short-lived subsistence in comparison with that of the dwellers in open streets. In habitations of this kind, the death-rate would of necessity be high, even if the population were thinly distributed in the district. Judge then, how the mortality of such courts must swell your aggregate death-rate for the city, when I tell you that their population is in many instances so excessive as in itself, and by its mere density, to breed disease. Statistics can give you no conception of this crowding. Instances are innumerable, in which a single room is occupied by a whole family, whatever may be its number, and whatever the ages and sexes of the children. It is no uncommon thing, in a room of twelve feet square or less, to find three or four families stye together (perhaps with infectious disease among them), filling the same space night and day. Who can wonder at what becomes, physically or morally, of infants born in these bestial crowds ? ”

The time, it is believed, has now passed for the

existence of such extreme cases. Through the operation of the Common Lodging-House Act of 1851, amended in 1853, "the grosser forms of domestic uncleanness have now been immensely abated." Inspectors and Sanitary Commissioners have been active in their endeavours to carry out the provisions of that Act, and to eradicate the great public evil against which it was directed. Regulations have been enforced, to a great extent, for the separation of the sexes in common lodging-houses; for proper ventilation, and cleansing, and every lodging-house keeper is compelled to give notice to the Commissioners of Police when any case of fever occurs. The results of this inspection and registration of houses have been very marked with regard to the diminution of epidemic disease. But much as may have been effected through these means, the remedy can only be regarded as very partial and limited in its operation, touching, as it does, the sanitary condition of no more than from 30,000 to 40,000 of the whole population of London. The dark courts and alleys still remain. In a space so vast, and so thickly covered with buildings, the establishment which would be capable of carrying out these rules of inspection, and the intentions of the Legislature to their fullest extent, must be immense. It is certain, then, that in a general sense, the work of cleansing, draining, and ventilating the dwellings of the poor, is but indicated, and just begun. There is constant evidence of this in the daily press, and from other sources of information. Not many weeks have passed since a description of Plum-tree-court, High Holborn, appeared in the *Times*, which exhibited a state of filth and abominations which could scarcely have been exceeded before the visitations of cholera

drew attention to these foci of disease. In March last, it was given in evidence before a Committee of the House of Commons, appointed to enquire into the appropriation of the site of Smithfield, that "the houses on the west side of the late market-place are some of the very worst in London." "You would not," Mr. Ross adds, "form a conception of it unless you went to see it. The inhabitants are all paupers. The houses have no frontage. There are three rooms in a house. It is a scandal and shame, I think, that such property should be allowed to be in the city of London, where ground is so valuable for the purposes of trade; it is a nest of paupers, and nothing else. There is a large space of three or four acres of ground occupied by houses of three rooms in each house, sometimes four rooms, the rooms being about eight feet high; and there you will see seven or eight people herding together in these rooms, for which they pay 2s. and 2s. 6d. each." Again, Mr. Simon, the Medical Officer of the Board of Health, informed the same Committee, that "between Smithfield and Snow-hill, in a large block of property belonging to St. Bartholomew's Hospital, there are courts which sunshine can scarcely penetrate, occupied by a population of some magnitude, which scarcely know what it is to get a breath of fresh air."

These examples, selected from many others of a similar import, are sufficient to shew what the purlieus of London still are, notwithstanding Sanitary Commissioners, Acts of Parliament, and the efforts of benevolent Associations. The work of reformation has, indeed, made little progress.

The operations of the several Societies for improving the condition of the labouring classes, have been

already made public from time to time, and particulars of each will be found in the periodical Reports. Their aim has been to supply superior and healthy accommodation for the same rent as inferior dwellings now command, and to shew, that "the investment of capital in such erections, is perfectly compatible with a fair mercantile return." The liability of shareholders of the Metropolitan, and of the Marylebone Associations, is limited to the amount of their shares, and they have restricted themselves to profits not exceeding 5 per cent. ; the excess, if any, to be devoted to an extension of their operations.

Taken altogether, between 1000 and 1100 families, and 733 unmarried working-men, are benefiting by these arrangements ; a number sufficient to show, that there is nothing in the temper or habits of the people to prevent them from living harmoniously in model lodging-houses, containing from 60 to 100 apartments, for families or single men. All parties, public and private, in the management of these buildings, have abstained from competition, either with professional builders or with common lodging-house keepers, (with regard to terms), offering merely better accommodation and more conveniences for equal rents ; but it cannot be concealed, that a large portion of the funds by means of which these benefits have been conferred, even on this limited number, have been derived from private beneficence, without reference to commercial returns. Of the two leading Societies whose liberal efforts have been devoted to these objects, the greatest dividend paid in any single year, has been in the case of the Metropolitan, at the rate of 3 per cent. ; with regard to the other, the Society for Improving the Condition of the Labouring Classes,



which is strictly a benevolent institution, the whole of the profits have been absorbed in payment of loans and of interest, and in promoting the objects of the Society.

Are then the resources of private benevolence to be still further taxed, in the endeavour to extend these unquestionable advantages to the poor, and to counteract some of the principal sources of moral degradation and physical evils to which they are now exposed? It is no longer desirable to give to this movement an eleemosynary character. The English artisan, as a general rule, desires not to be provided with lodging on half-gratuitous terms, and for the very poorest grades of society such assistance is little to be desired. Before any widely-extended plans for improving the dwellings of the industrious classes can have any prospect of success, it is absolutely necessary to solve the question as to whether they can be made self-supporting, and give besides a fair rate of profit for the capital embarked. This result is known to have been attained by the Windsor Royal Society, and by several private persons, as by Mr. E. Hilliard, at Shadwell, and Mr. Newson, of Grosvenor-mews.

As it seems essential to the success of these Societies, on a scale at all commensurate with the wants of the people, that they should be placed exclusively on a business footing, this paper will be devoted to a consideration of the subject on purely commercial grounds, and the result of calculations and inquiries on this most important point shall now be given.

“The Society for Improving the Condition of the Labouring Classes” has 41,000*l.* employed in buildings; of which one-half or more, consists of funds borrowed at the current rate of interest of the day,

ranging from 3 to  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. The capital has been apportioned somewhat in this manner:—

£19,000 in new buildings for single persons,  
 2,000 in old and improved dwellings for ditto,  
 13,900 in new buildings for families,  
 6,100 in old and improved dwellings for the same.

£41,000

The last sum in the list, or about one-seventh of the whole, has been only recently expended, and is not yet fully productive.

It is not therefore possible to show fairly upon the whole income any general result from this outlay. All that can be done, is to select examples from those buildings which have been longest occupied, and ascertain how each has succeeded, with reference to the distinct divisions into which the capital has been classified. The following table comprises an analysis of this kind:

—	—	Occu- pied since	Cost.	Average Annual Rent for 3 Years.			Average Annual Profits.			Per Cent- age of Profit.
			£	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	
George-street, Bloomsbury	{ New buildings, for 104 single men . . . }	1847	6426	613	9	6	260	13	4	4
Portpool-lane, Gray's Inn .	{ New buildings, for 128 single women and 20 families . }	1851	12,002	440	10	5	263	14	8	$2\frac{1}{2}$
Charles-street, Drury-lane .	{ Old & improved dwellings for 84 single men }	1847	1163	416	14	8	150	1	5	$12\frac{1}{2}$
Streatham-st., Bloomsbury.	{ New buildings, for 54 families }	1850	8916	698	3	5	412	2	1	$4\frac{6}{10}$
Bagnigge Wells	{ New buildings, for 30 aged fe- males and 23 families . . }	1845	6369	376	5	2	279	9	1	$4\frac{4}{10}$

Neither the expenses for repairs nor an allowance for a sinking fund are separately stated in the accounts, so that deductions would have to be made on these heads.

If the same test be applied to the operations of the Metropolitan Association, the following results appear. The capital has been thus distributed:—

£13,731 in new buildings for 234 single men,  
 1,422 in old and improved dwellings for 128 ditto,  
 61,333 in new buildings for 338 families,  
 7,568 in old and improved dwellings for 55 ditto.

£84,054

From these sums also, selections must be made to exhibit the financial results of the four different methods of employing the capital of the Association.

—	—	Occu- pied since	Cost.	Average Annual Rent for 3 Years.	Average Annual Profits.	Per Cent- age of Profit.
Albert-street Chambers, Spitalfields.	{ New buildings, for 234 single men . . . }	1851	£ 13,731	£ s. d. 1099 10 4	£ s. d. 156 10 9	1 $\frac{1}{10}$
Soho Chambers	{ Old & improved dwellings for 128 single men }	1851	1422	839 13 5	Loss. 38 11 4	...
Albert-st. and Pancras-sq.	{ New buildings, for 170 families }	1847 1850	29,602	1996 6 2	1145 4 1	3 $\frac{8}{10}$
Pelham-street and Pleasant- row . . .	{ Old & improved dwellings for 21 families }	1850	5131	367 0 2	207 4 9	4

The houses for single men have been at a disadvantage during the two past years on account of the war, labouring men of all descriptions having been, for obvious reasons, more than usually unsettled in their places of abode; but, even with this adverse circumstance, the gross rent realized from them by the two Societies, as appears from the statement on the following page, averages nearly 10 per cent. on the cost of the buildings, which, if one-half be taken as the proportion of ordinary current expenses, would leave a very fair return upon the capital expended.

	Capital.	Average Gross Rent per Ann. for 3 Years.
George-street	. £ 6426 . .	£ 613 9 6
Portpool-lane	. 12002 . .	440 10 5
Charles-street	. 1163 . .	416 14 8
Albert-street	. 13731 . .	1099 10 4
Soho Chambers	. 1422 . .	839 13 5
	<hr/> £ 34744	<hr/> £ 3409 18 4

It is evident that before a site for this kind of property is determined on, the locality should be well studied, in order that the extent of accommodation provided should not exceed the probable demand. In George-street, Bloomsbury, this condition has been attended to, and it is accordingly found, that there are seldom vacancies in the house for any length of time. The profit on this building has been 4 per cent., whereas in the large establishment in Albert-street, Spitalfields, it has been  $1\frac{1}{10}$  per cent. only. There, owing partly to the extent of cottage property in the neighbourhood, and to other causes, the accommodation for single men is much in excess of the local demand. The proportional outlay in each case has been much the same, from 58*l.* to 61*l.* per man. The large size of the Albert-street house is not in its favour. When establishments of this kind are on such a scale, the space devoted to general use, as coffee-room, reading-room, and kitchens, is necessarily great, and is so far unremunerative, as the rents are only in proportion to the number of bed places which the house affords. In any new undertakings it seems probable, that a house for 60 or 80 single men, would be more satisfactory to the inmates, and more remunerative to its owners, than one of larger size. On the

24th June there were only 141 lodgers in the Albert-street model lodging-house, intended for 234 men.

The old dwellings improved by the two Societies for the accommodation of single men, show very anomalous results; in one case a profit of  $12\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. on the outlay, and in the other an actual loss, on a three years' average. The locality of Charles-street, Drury-lane, where the success has been so marked, is favourable; but there seems to be no such decided advantage in this respect over the Soho Chambers, as to account for the difference. This has been caused, apparently, by the charge per week being lower in one case than the other, viz. 2s. 4d. in Charles-street, and 3s. 6d. in Soho. The Soho building is, moreover, dark and ill suited to the purpose to which it has been applied. There were, a few weeks ago, 90 lodgers: 128 is the number for which it is arranged. The place is evidently not in favour with the working men. A few of the inmates, although expressing themselves satisfied that every attention was paid to their comfort, drew comparisons between those chambers, and the cheerful and excellent building in Spitalfields. The contrast is, indeed, most striking in every respect. If, upon the Soho site, a new structure could have been placed on the model plan, and of moderate size, the result would have been very different; but a heavy ground-rent of 300*l.* per annum renders this almost impracticable. The capital which this annual charge represents is 7500*l.*, to which the cost of the building would have to be added; the rents, therefore, to be remunerative, must in any case be high on that spot.

The most important branch of this subject, is accommodation for families of the working classes.

The greater part of the capital has been accordingly employed in that manner, amounting to more than 75,000*l.* for the two Societies. To obtain a three years' experience, it is necessary to select three buildings, representing a sum of 38,518*l.*, which is the actual cost of construction for 224 families, or at the rate of 172*l.* for every family. The average revenue derived from these establishments during the last three years, has been 2694*l.* 9*s.* 7*d.*, and the average profits, after deducting all expenses, have been fully 4 per cent. The house in Bloomsbury, belonging to the Society for Improving the Condition of the Labouring Classes, is favourably situated, and has been well filled. It has yielded more than 4½ per cent., and with economical management would show even a better result.

The other two examples of family dwellings, one in Albert-street, Spitalfields, the other in Pancras-square, belonging to the Metropolitan Association, have not succeeded so well. Both Spitalfields and Pancras-square are somewhat in the outskirts of London; they are not overcrowded localities, and neither of them can be considered very favourable for model dwellings on a large scale. The first, however, in Albert-street, is now nearly full; but the Pancras-square building, which is adapted for 110 families, contains only 90 at present. In 1854 the inmates of all sexes and ages numbered 700. A building so large is scarcely adapted for family comfort. Where so many women and children come in contact with one another, annoyances will arise, and the chances of disagreements are proportionately increased. Dwellings for 50 or 60 families would be a better mean size for future undertakings, and it appears to amount

almost to a certainty that two buildings on that scale, in different localities, would answer much better than one of the larger size.

These then appear to be some of the causes which have exercised an adverse influence on the general productiveness of the capital, and have prevented the Metropolitan Association from dividing more than  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. to shareholders on the operations of the past year. It will be seen that on 1422*l.* there has been an actual loss, and that 13,731*l.* has yielded only  $1\frac{1}{10}$  per cent., while the sum of 29,602*l.*, invested in family dwellings, has produced a clear profit of only  $3\frac{1}{10}$  per cent. Had the Albert-street and Pancras dwellings, for families, been filled during the last three years, the gross annual rents would have amounted to 2600*l.* 13*s.* Whereas, these have only averaged 1996*l.* 6*s.* 2*d.* The expenses remaining the same, the difference between these two sums, if it could have been realised, would have added 2 per cent. to the profits.

Considerable success in other new buildings or improvements, will be requisite to cover the unproductiveness of so large a sum as 15,153*l.* (Albert-street, 13,731*l.*; Soho, 1422*l.* = 15,153*l.*), and to yield a fair return on the whole capital of the Association. To adapt the supply of accommodation to the local demand, both in regard to quantity and rent, is the one thing needful. The first outlay on buildings should be curtailed in every way consistent with durability, and reasonable space for the occupants, and the rents charged should not be higher than are paid in the commonest lodging-houses. The cleanliness and superior conveniences of the model houses will be sure to prove attractive.

Instead of 172*l.* for every family, which has been the rate of outlay in several buildings, it is known that the work, on a scale sufficient for comfort and health, can be done for 100*l.* or less, as has been proved by Mr. Newson, who sold to the Parochial Association of St. George's, Hanover-square, accommodation for 32 families for 3100*l.*

The Mary-le-bone Association has not been long enough in existence to show what commercial results it will achieve, but the prospects are said to be encouraging. After an outlay of 9009*l.*, the probable net income will be 680*l.* The attention of this Society, will, it is believed, be given chiefly to the improvement of existing courts and buildings, in which it has already experienced some success. The tenements which they have taken in hand for alteration have been eagerly sought for as soon as ready for occupation.

At Westminster, while the Military Authorities are hesitating to provide separate accommodation for married soldiers (a system which has been acted on in India for some years past by the East India Company with the happiest effects), the Officers of the Guards, at their own expense and risk, have constructed a neat building for 50 soldiers and their families. At present, there are only 31 families in this lodging-house, and for some time past 43 has been the greatest number. Several reasons have combined to produce this result, but the purpose of the building being special, it is an example which does not affect the general question. The outlay here was at the rate of 159*l.* per family or for each set of apartments.

At Lambeth, a fine range of dwellings, opposite to the London Gas Works, has been constructed by



the Duchy of Cornwall, at a cost of 16,000*l.* The apartments are excellent, but the rents varying from 3*s.* 6*d.* to 7*s.* 6*d.* per week are more than the class of men who inhabit that neighbourhood can afford. Inferior lodgings at lower rates are procurable near at hand, and as a general rule, it is found difficult for superior conveniences to command higher rents than prevail in the same locality. The ground floor is fitted for shops, with plate-glass windows, better suited to Ludgate-hill, than to so low a neighbourhood as Vauxhall-square. Only one of them is let. There are 47 sets of apartments for families, of which 17 are occupied. The average outlay for each set of apartments was 340*l.*, which is unusually large. Here, then, is an instance of failure, owing to a want of adaptation to local circumstances in regard to original cost of construction and the rents charged. An expensive building in a poor neighbourhood!

As an instance of the successful application of capital to improved dwellings of an humble class, Mr. Newson's undertaking in Grosvenor-mews was recently noticed in the *Times*. He had two buildings, valued each at 3100*l.*, one of which is retained in his own possession. They each produce 320*l.* a year, in rents of from 3*s.* 6*d.* to 4*s.* 6*d.* per week. The expenses in one case, on account of taxes, ground-rent, water, gas, and collecting, are 155*l.*, and in the other 125*l.*, leaving profits of 165*l.* and 195*l.* respectively, or at the rate of  $5\frac{1}{3}$  and  $6\frac{1}{3}$  per cent. on cost. An annual sum as sinking fund to redeem the lease of 77 years is omitted in this calculation, and an allowance for vacancies, though these have been hitherto few and for short periods; but taking all

this into account, the clear income in the case which is least favourable, is only a fraction less than 5 per cent. on the original cost.

The Windsor Royal Society has been most successful, whether in regard to adaptation of its buildings to the means and wants of the people, or to remunerative employment of the capital at its command. There are (in addition to a lodging-house, which has been let to the Ordnance Department) two rows of cottages, with a strip of garden ground on either side, built much after the model of the prize cottage exhibited in 1851, though not detached. The superintendent's house, washing-house, and bath, are in the central space. The whole aspect of this group of cottages is most pleasing. It contains (on two floors) accommodation for 48 families, of which number 46 were in occupation a few days ago, consisting principally of mechanics, porters, and others of the labouring class. The cottages are not detached, but are divided by partition walls, either into sets for four families or for one. In the former, access to the upper rooms being by an external flight of steps, which are covered by the main roof. The tenants are not allowed to take in lodgers, but, provided the occupants be of the same family, there is no restriction as to whether they shall live in a two, three, or four-roomed cottage. The rents are,—

For one room . . . . .	1s. 6d. per week.
For two rooms and a scullery . . . . .	3s. „
For one parlour, two bed-rooms, and a scullery . . . . .	4s. to 4s. 6d. „
An entire house—three bed- rooms, parlour, and kitchen . . . . .	5s. 6d. „

One halfpenny an hour is paid for the use of the

washing-house, and for the same small payment a whole family can have the use of the bath.

After paying all expenses, the Society was enabled, last Lady-day, to pay a dividend of 5 per cent. to the shareholders.

Mr. Hilliard's cottages, in Shadwell, are very similar to those of the Windsor Society. They occupy two sides of a street, one end of which abuts upon the Blackwall-railway viaduct. They are built on an uniform plan, with slight variations, and are exactly suited to the neighbourhood, the whole surface of which, for miles around, is covered with a small class of buildings of two or three stories, with which these cottages assimilate in character, while they offer many advantages with regard to cleanliness and conveniences. They are tenanted by bargemen and their families, sailmakers, and others connected with the shipping trade. All who were spoken to on the spot concurred in saying how much they preferred such rooms to "apartments" in an ordinary lodging-house, and dwelt on the advantages of the complete separation in which the families were able to live, although so near one another. The want of a small washing-house and boiler is felt by some of the tenants; to several of the cottages it has been supplied for an additional charge of 6*d.* per week.

Each block of these cottages, containing four families, cost 480*l.*, and yields fifty guineas rent per annum. The property is freehold, but taking into the calculation ground-rent at 4*l.* per house, which would be a fair average, together with poor-rates, property-tax, paving, sewers, water, insurance, repairs, and collecting, the expenses amount to 18*l.* 7*s.* a year, which leaves a clear profit of

34*l.* 3*s.* upon every house, or more than 7 per cent. ; and this profit, it is stated, is actually realised by Mr. Hilliard from 28 cottages.

A very promising method of employing the capital of these Societies is in altering and improving old ranges of buildings, courts, and alleys, so that they may possess all the sanitary advantages of the most modern dwellings. Caution is necessary in the selection, both as to the condition of the property and the length of lease ; but if done with judgment it is likely to be productive of much good. For an outlay of 3015*l.*, upon improvements to Gray's Buildings, in Duke-street, Manchester-square, the Mary-le-bone Association expects to realise a net income of more than 400*l.*

In Spitalfields two rows of dwellings of this description, altered and improved, and occupied by weavers principally, for three years past, have yielded a profit of 5  $\frac{1}{10}$  per cent. on the outlay. The advantages of a proper system of ventilation, drainage, and water supply to such places, which before were undrained, ill ventilated, and sources of disease and death, are so much beyond any mere pecuniary consideration, that this point would not be urged were it not from a conviction that the most effective manner of removing these moral stains from our Metropolis, will be by attracting private enterprise. No one can yet say what will be the ultimate good effect of cleansing and purifying these alleys and courts. If to filth and all its debasing influences, cleanliness, order, and comfort are made to succeed, may not some of the higher feelings of man be reached, till in the end the purification will be, not only material, but moral and spiritual.

When a place of this kind is taken in hand by one of the Societies, and all the necessary improvements have been made, the first step is to appoint a judicious and good-tempered Superintendent to reside in one of the apartments; to collect the rents, and exercise a general supervision over the lodgers. He is a man of their own class, and by force of character soon acquires an influence over them, so that the little colony comes insensibly under a kind of mild discipline, in striking contrast to the disorder which reigned before. This change can be witnessed in Wild-court, Drury-lane; in Clark's-buildings, Holborn. It is in progress in Tyndal's-buildings, a very bad locality; and in Gray's-buildings, inhabited by the Irish, who were dislodged from Calmel-buildings, once so well known for disorder and dirt. Every one acquainted with the previous condition of these places will admit that the improvements effected are not merely a benefit, but a blessing to the people.

If such great advantages to the physical well-being of the working classes can be secured by a moderate outlay on existing buildings, which would in most cases be profitable, even in a pecuniary point of view, will the public be content that no measures whatever are taken by the Government of the country to spread these unquestionable benefits; that their progress be left to chance, to the fitful and irregular flow of private capital?

If the application of public money to the drainage of land be justifiable, much more so would it be to the cultivation of better domestic habits amongst the poor, to the saving of human life, by draining, cleansing, and ventilating the narrow spots where so many thousands of our labouring population actually

dwell. To what better object could the assistance of the public funds, at a low rate of interest, be lent? Here are three organised Societies.

1st, The Society for Improving the Condition of the Labouring Classes.

2ndly, The Metropolitan Association for Improving the Dwellings of the Industrious Classes.

3rdly, The Marylebone Association for Improving the Dwellings of the Industrious Classes.

All have succeeded in effecting to a certain extent an acknowledged good, have the advantage of some years' experience, both in failures and successes, and possess all the requisite establishments for extending their operations, yet are cramped in available funds. What reasonable objection can there be to Government advances being made at a low interest to these Societies? As a general rule such direct aid from the State is, of course, objectionable, but the case is entirely exceptional. Will the Government, or the public, be satisfied that out of the whole population of London about 100 families only, of the industrious classes every year, shall have the benefit of improved dwellings? This is about the proportion in which they have been affected by this movement for twelve years past. Lord Shaftesbury, at a recent meeting, very justly remarked, that this was "not only a physical and a moral, but a religious question," whether the working classes of this metropolis, and of other large towns, shall be abandoned to the squalor and the degrading influences of their wretched dwellings? What hope is there that amidst such filth and misery the desire for education can take root, improved habits and higher principles can spring up? They are plants foreign to such soil.

The Legislature might, possibly, in other ways encourage the construction of improved dwellings for the poor. The house-tax is now levied upon several of the buildings, though not upon all, as if they were inhabited by one person or family; whereas, in equity, every set of apartments should be considered a separate tenement.

The greatest sum paid by a tenant in one of these model lodging-houses is 7s. 6d. a week, which does not amount to 20l. a year. By far the largest number pay not more than half of that sum. The access to each room, or set of apartments, is by a staircase common to several persons, which is as open and public as the street. As 10l. householders the occupants are all qualified to vote, so that, if for one purpose their rooms are considered separate dwellings, they ought to be so for all; and since no houses yielding a rent of less than 20l. a year are subject to the tax, the lodging-houses, both separately and collectively, should also be exempt.

It is therefore to be regretted, that the Legislature has not yet been able to see its way towards applying to these dwellings for the poor what appears to be a just principle of taxation.

When broad lines of communication are opened through a crowded part of the town, the Legislature might reasonably insist on having ground set apart as sites for new buildings for the poor. The first effect of metropolitan improvements is to compress the working classes into narrower limits. Evasions of the Common Lodging-house Act are thus forced upon the lodging-house keepers, as well as upon the people, and it is impossible, that, under these circumstances, the Act can be properly administered.

The locality of the late cattle-market at Smithfield is admirably suited for lodging-houses on the new plan, and it would be very desirable that portions of it should be devoted to that purpose. The committee appointed to inquire into the proper appropriation of that site have recommended that it be preserved as an open space; but owing, they say, to the irregularity of its outline, there will be some difficulty in the adaptation of the whole as a place of recreation. A favourable opportunity, which so rarely occurs in the very centre of the metropolis, is thus presented for granting, on moderate terms, building sites for improved dwellings for the labouring classes, who abound in that neighbourhood. In the parish of Clerkenwell, close by, there were, by the last census, 64,705 persons, the great majority of whom were working people with families.

The permanent inhabitants of this part of London consist principally of the labouring classes, all others, whose means admit, having their homes and families in the suburbs. Taking Smithfield as a centre, there is, perhaps, no other part of the world, within so small a radius, where the demand for human labour is so great as there; and, in like manner, there is probably no other spot which stands so much in need of good dwellings for the poor, nor one in which model lodging-houses, on an extended scale, would be so certain of success.

A considerable part of the present vacant space of West Smithfield, as well as by the side of Long-lane, belongs to the Corporation of the city of London, from whom something is due to the poor, "who (as stated by Mr. George Brook, in evidence before a Committee of the House of Commons in May last)



have been cleared away from the immediate vicinity of Leadenhall-market, and from other localities, and have been driven out of many lanes and alleys, to make room for large buildings."

In the second annual report on the sanitary condition of the city, after enumerating several blocks of houses which, from errors of construction, are irremediably bad and pestilential, as in the out-wards of Cripplegate, Farringdon, and Bishopsgate, the in-wards of the city, the neighbourhood of Printing-house-square, of Great Bell-alley, of Leadenhall-street, Aldgate, Skinner-street, and St. Martin's-le-Grand, Mr. Simon makes the following valuable suggestion: "The only manner in which the remedies could be applied would be through the wealth and benevolence of the Corporation. If there were vested in your honourable Court (or in any other authority of the Corporation) the power to make compulsory purchases of house property, on the ground of its unfitness for human habitation, it would be easy to correct the extreme errors which exist; and, under a large landlordship of this nature, it might not improbably be found, that measures such as I have described would give to the localities in which they might be effected as much improvement in value as in health. After the necessary alterations, such houses would no longer need to continue under the tenure of the Corporation, and the proceeds of their sale might again be applied to the reclamation of similar property in other parts of the city."

This is advice, tendered by the Officer of Health to the city, one who, probably above all others, has had the best opportunities of witnessing the wretched condition of the dwellings of the poor, and has

pointed out repeatedly the consequences to which it inevitably leads. The Corporation of the city have not resisted this appeal, grounded as it is on wisdom, on benevolence, it may also be said on self-preservation. It is known that a considerable sum of money has been set apart for constructing improved dwellings for the labouring classes within the limits of the city, and no time should be lost in carrying this object into effect.

Not far from Smithfield is the General Post-office, employing several hundred men. The services of these men are sometimes required at short notice, and it would be convenient if they lived in a locality from which they could be readily summoned. If model lodging-houses were erected in that neighbourhood the Post-office servants would probably be attracted to them in large numbers; for it may be asserted without fear of contradiction, that whether as single men or with families, they could not be so well accommodated, or on terms so moderate, in any other lodging-house whatever. The unmarried man has a well-ventilated sleeping berth of which he keeps the key, a bed and bedding, a box for his clothes, a washing place, towel, and soap, a kitchen fire, hot water, every convenience for cooking, even salt without any additional charge, besides a spacious coffee-room and reading-room. All these comforts they enjoy for a weekly rent varying from 2s. 4d. to 3s. 6d. each; and without a tenth part of these conveniences, 4d. a night is about the usual charge for a bed in one of the meanest houses.

The advantages enjoyed by the families of working men occupying such houses are, in their way, fully as great. With the exception that access to their apartments is from a public staircase, they are as much

isolated from their neighbours as if they lived side by side in a street. The set of apartments consists of two, three, or four rooms, adapted for families of any number, and at rents of 1*s.* 9*d.*, 2*s.*, 2*s.* 6*d.*, 3*s.* 6*d.*, to 7*s.* and 7*s.* 6*d.* per week. In the newest buildings, the ventilation is well contrived, so that, although the rooms are small, the air within is continually changed. All impure air is carried away by means of a vertical shaft at the back of the fire-grate. The smoke flues have no connection with it, but the heat which they impart rarefies the column of air in the "vitiating air-shaft," and causes a constant ascending current. An opening near the ceiling admits the foul air into the shaft, and to this point there is a constant flow, so that the admission of fresh external air, and the circulation from one room to another being provided by a few perforated bricks in the walls, stagnation is impossible. Would that this principle, based as it is on simple and natural laws, were applied to some of our rooms and buildings of more pretensions!

In the best model-houses there is a scullery with water supply, etc., attached to every set of apartments, but in others, where the rooms are approached by a long passage or gallery, there are two sculleries only on every flat. The latter is of course the most economical plan, but the other is preferred, and would be cheerfully paid for by many. A detached washing-house and drying ground are generally provided. Drying stoves, rinsing machines, mangles, and other conveniences have been tried with but partial success. It is generally admitted that a small ordinary washing house, furnished with copper boilers, is sufficient.

In the sitting room of every set of apartments there is a good grate with oven and boiler on either

side, and a place for coals: the ashes and sweepings are discharged through a "dust shaft," having openings on every flat. It was at first considered that to plaster the walls of the rooms or, at the utmost, to colour them, would suffice; but the tenants were not satisfied, and the sitting room is now invariably papered, which is a gratifying sign of the value set by this class of people on such appearances.

In some of the lodging-houses lately visited, it was most pleasing to observe other proofs, that, in the humble walks of life, it is the opportunity only which an English housewife requires, to garnish her home as far as her means will admit. A mirror over the mantel-shelf, a sofa, prints and pictures on the walls, ornaments on the shelves and tables, give to some of these little parlours an air of neatness and simple elegance. On noticing the display of plants in one of their windows, "Oh yes, sir," the wife said, "our homes is every thing to us poor people;" "we like to make them tidy though we are but poor." Contentment and cheerfulness were there, and, although more refinement and greater luxuries are available to the rich, it is certain that no greater happiness can be enjoyed, than that which was witnessed in several of those neat but lowly dwellings.

The occupants of several rooms recently visited, expressed themselves without one exception highly satisfied with their accommodation, adding, that for the rents they paid they could not anywhere else obtain so many conveniences.

The rents in all these model lodging-houses are collected weekly without difficulty; arrears occasionally occur, but defalcations, except for small amounts, scarcely ever. In one case, the actual losses in one

year were 5*l.*, out of a total rental of 1200*l.*, which is scarcely  $\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. A tenant is very rarely ejected for nonpayment. The Societies reserve the right of doing so for riotous conduct, or the habitual use of bad language, if persisted in to the annoyance of other lodgers. These facts augur well for the success of the model lodging-house system.

The experiment, so far as the people are concerned, has been entirely successful, and it is believed that, for the future, it will be so also to the capitalist, if proper regard be paid to the experience of the past. If a suggestion might be ventured upon to the Associations that have been the pioneers in this good cause, it is, that all the usual means should be resorted to for attracting the employment of capital to fresh undertakings under their management; and as this can never take place without the ordinary inducement, it might be worth their consideration, whether the issue of preference shares, to which certain definite rates of interest could be attached, would not place them in a position to extend their operations considerably, and, in the end, to make the whole amply remunerative.

The limit of 5 per cent. profits should also be removed, for it will be much more *true benevolence* to extend the advantages of healthy homes to thousands, than that the over-scrupulous should refuse to receive more than a limited return for money which can only provide a few hundreds with this blessing. The available capital must be increased, or the whole thing will stagnate to an indefinite period.

The sanitary effects which have resulted from improved dwellings for the labouring classes are such as might reasonably have been expected. If you take men, women, and children, from a noxious atmosphere,

from crowded unventilated rooms, and the depressing influences of filth, and place them under conditions entirely opposite, improved health and a lower rate of mortality will follow, as effect from cause. It is accordingly found that the inhabitants of the new and altered lodging-houses have been subject to a mortality in the proportion of only one-half of that which is known to occur to the rest of the population of London. In the houses of the Metropolitan Association, during the year ending June last, out of 1918 inhabitants of all sexes and ages, there were only 21 deaths, of which 13 were children under ten years of age. In Tyndal's-buildings, one of the worst courts of London, which has been recently taken in hand and improved by the Society for Improving the Condition of the Labouring Classes, there were but two deaths last year out of 490 persons; and in other houses of the Society, containing a population of 1417 persons, there have been only 13 deaths, which is less than 1 per cent.

Turning to the moral results which changes of this nature in the dwellings of the people are calculated to produce, there is a wide field for thought. In the train of cleanliness, decency, and domestic comforts, how many good influences may follow and take possession of the working man? Raised first in his own esteem, he will not only himself become a better man, but will seek to educate and advance his children in the social scale, till possibly "one and all" become amenable to feelings of a higher and more enduring interest. The state of the dwellings of the poor may, without exaggeration, be said to be closely connected with their moral and religious advancement; to improve the one is to lay a foundation for the other,

and every step towards that object is progress in a sacred work.\*

With regard to future proceedings it may be urged

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\* On the conclusion of the war in the Punjaub, and the annexation of that province, it became my duty to superintend the construction of barracks for eleven thousand men, comprising the European portion of two Divisions of the Indian Army. The Government, acting on the conviction that spacious, well-ventilated, and well-lighted barrack-rooms are essential to the health of the soldier, resolved that the new barracks should be erected on a scale which had not been attempted before in India. Instead of the gloomy, dark, and depressing places in which the men at some of the old stations had to pass the greatest part of the day during the hot season, they have now in the Punjaub cheerful and capacious rooms, 24 feet high, and well lighted from above, so that the soldier may read, if he likes, while lying in his cot.

There is also a public reading-room and a workshop, under the same roof, in the barrack of every company.

A further reform, to which I recur with great satisfaction, was made at the same time, by the construction of separate ranges of building for the *married soldiers* of every European regiment, troop, or company, in the Punjaub. The practice had been to give one barrack to the married men, their wives and children. The families were crowded into one long room, and in the enclosed verandahs, separated only by such screens as they were able themselves to put up, so that ventilation was impeded, and neither health nor decency could be preserved. Every family has now two good rooms, separated from the rest by a party wall, eight feet high, and a wide verandah surrounds the whole. When these were ready for occupation, the soldiers' wives laid down carpets and arranged their rooms in the neatest manner.

It cannot be doubted that these additions to the comfort and decency of the domestic life of the soldier while in barracks will have a most beneficial effect upon his general conduct.

The extent to which these arrangements were carried may be judged from the fact that the length of barracks and hospital for each regiment, 1184 strong, if placed end to end in one right line, would measure within 101 feet of one mile! The breadth, including the walls and verandahs of each barrack, is 93 feet. There was no unnecessary extension of space, 3 feet intervals only being preserved between the soldiers' beds.

The expenditure on these barracks, and all other military works in the Punjaub which it was my duty to superintend and control, was 197,633*l.* for the year 1853, and had been much the same during the four previous years. 11,386 workmen were daily employed upon the works in progress, and 8109 head of cattle for burthen and draught.

that houses, if newly constructed for these purposes, should be rather numerous than large,\* in order that the advantages they afford may be available to working men in every part of the town. They should be built in well-chosen localities: some expressly for poorer families, paying a rent of less than 2*s.* a week; others for a medium, and some for a better class; so that the payments may be proportioned to the rates of wages generally earned in the neighbourhood. If ground could be obtained on moderate terms, there is no doubt that lodging-houses of these grades would produce a fair return for the capital employed. The gross revenue from such property should not be less than 10 per cent. on the outlay, of which one-half would go to expenses, to cover occasional vacancies, and the rest to profit. The proportions between original cost and rents to be realised from a single family would stand thus:—

Sets of Apartments, consisting of—	Rent per Week.		Annual Rent.			Cost of Building per Family, including Ground-rent, Sink- ing Fund for Lease, and all Expenses.		
	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>	£	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>	£	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>
1 Room } with common Scullery	1	9	4	11	0	45	0	0
2 Rooms } with common Scullery	2	6	6	10	0	65	0	0
3 Rooms } with separate Scullery	4	0	10	8	0	100	0	0
4 Rooms } with separate Scullery	6	6	16	18	0	165	0	0

The interest of these sums at 10 per cent. for one year corresponds nearly with the column of annual rent.

Rents on this scale would be quite within the means of steady labouring men, who are generally

\* See note, page 35.



willing to spend a liberal portion of their wages in providing themselves and families with commodious and healthy dwellings.

The addition of a public room to these family houses, where the men might meet for amusement, would be much valued, and would probably prevent them from resorting for society to other places. But to those who lead a life of extravagance and vice, it is useless to hold out advantages such as these. To procure their selfish indulgences they will deny themselves the commonest domestic comforts; they are strangers even to the use of beds; and cleanliness or comfort in any shape are words to them of small significance. What can be done for men who receive nightly lodgers in a single room in which their whole family sleeps, paying for that room only 1s. 6d. a week? It is to be feared that they must be left to the Lodging-house Act, and to occasional inspections by the police.

But let us not be altogether without hope even with regard to these. A proposition has been made by Mr. Simon, for instituting within each Union of the city, "a dormitory for the 'very poor,' in which the best accommodation should be provided which the price usually paid by this class of people would purchase, where they would have the means of lying down free from damp or cold, partitioned from one another, or, at least, with isolation of the sexes, in a building either constructed or adapted for the purpose, where the ventilation and the facilities for cleanliness might be complete. There seems little room to doubt that this might be done, on a very large scale, at a rate considerably less than the poorest now pay for the right of lairage, amid vermin, filth, obscenity, and

fever; and with such dormitories, obviously, there might be connected other arrangements for giving comfort and cleanliness to the very poor and destitute at the lowest possible price."

It would scarcely be necessary to place the charges for such improved accommodation lower than now paid by people in the poorest condition. For two-pence each night very decent barrack accommodation might be given.

In endeavouring to put this subject in a plain and practical manner before the public, I have confined myself to a mere statement of facts; but the facts alone are eloquent, and cannot fail to excite a desire for remedial measures on a far more extended scale than has been hitherto practicable. Experiment has done its part in showing the direction in which the remedy lies. Action is now necessary to carry on the work.

As a fit appendix to these observations, the newspapers of the 6th ult. give the details of an inquest upon the bodies of a labouring man and his three step-children, killed by the fall of a lodging-house in Little Swan-alley, in the city. From the evidence given, the floors appear to have been "thoroughly rotten and eaten away," and to have "fallen in all of a lump together."

J. F. King, occupying "the top floor back," hearing a sound, suddenly "found himself below," but escaped with his life. He had complained of the state of the floors, and the dilapidated state of the house. The landlord told him "he must make the best of it." The windows had no glass. "When he took the room the glass was broken, but, being unable to buy glass, he patched it up in the best way he could. He

paid 1s. 6d. per week. He and his wife, his wife's sister, and four children slept on the floor, having no beds."

*London, October, 1856.*

NOTE.—As an instance of a Lodging-house on a small scale, which accords with these views, there is now in course of erection in Hopkins-street, Golden-square, a building to accommodate thirty-two families of the working class. It is understood to be the undertaking of a Clergyman residing in the neighbourhood of the Metropolis.

Mr. Newson has also commenced the construction of another building, in Bull's Head-court, King-street, Snowhill. He is to pay a ground-rent of 20*l.* per annum. The scale and arrangements of the building, for thirty-two families, will be precisely the same as those in Grosvenor-mews, and there can be no doubt that it will be equally successful. Mr. Newson has obligingly furnished me with a detail of all the items of annual expenditure on the two buildings alluded to at page 17, which is here subjoined :—

	No. 1, Building cost 3100 <i>l.</i> , including Profit to the Builder.			No. 2, Bloomfield Place, cost 3100 <i>l.</i> , including Profit to the Builder.		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Ground-rent . . . . .	80	0	0	55	0	0
Poor-rate {						
Police-rate { 1s. 10 <i>d.</i> in the pound on 176 <i>l.</i>	16	2	8	9	3	4
General Rate, 1s. . . . .	8	16	0	5	0	0
House-tax . . . . .						
Property-tax, 1s. 4 <i>d.</i> in the pound on 200 <i>l.</i>	13	6	0	7	6	8
Sewers-rate, 2 <i>d.</i> . . . .	1	9	6	0	16	8
Gas for the year . . . . .	8	10	0	6	0	0
Water-rate for the whole . . . . .	10	0	0	8	0	0
Insurance for 12 months . . . . .	6	15	0	0	18	0*
Sinking-fund to redeem the Lease . . . . .	7	0	0	7	0	0
Repairs, 1 per cent. on 3100 <i>l.</i> . . . .	31	0	0	31	0	0
Collecting, 5 per cent. on 330 <i>l.</i> . . . .	12	0	0	12	0	0
	£ 194 19 2			141 18 8		
Gross rent received during the last year	343	5	6	334	4	0
Actual Income or Profit upon original cost	£148	6	4	£192	5	4

\* Only one portion of this building is insured.

