AN ENGLISHMAN'S CASTLE
AN ENGLISHMAN'S CASTLE
BY THE SAME AUTHOR

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An Englishman's Castle

BY

M. LOANE

AUTHOR OF
'THE QUEEN'S POOR,' 'THE NEXT STREET BUT ONE
ETC.

SECOND IMPRESSION

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M. L.
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AN ENGLISHMAN'S CASTLE

I

It is impossible to deny that the poor demand a price for admission to their homes. Years ago, whenever I found a chronic sufferer, I tried to get people of leisure to interest themselves in the case, and I was pained and surprised to find how soon their visits ceased. At first—somewhat uncharitably—I attributed this to my friends' lack of 'grace to persevere,' but it gradually dawned upon me that the defection arose from their inability to meet the unhesitating and increasing demands that were made on their purse by the relatives of the invalid, and that although I, a trained nurse, was admitted with empty hands, and never met with a direct request for alms, my friends had a different reception. They must pay their footing, must 'bring their welcome with them'; and the worst part of it was that there was no fixed scale of charges. If a bill had been presented: 'To permitting Mrs. K. N. to sing hymns to my bedridden mother, 1s. 6d.; To allowing her to supply illustrated newspapers to my rheumatic husband, 3s. 9d.; to accepting a dressed doll for my crippled child, 1s. 4d.' they might have borne it. Instead of this, they were asked for a milk pudding one week, five hundredweight of coal the next, a
chain bedstead the next, and so on, the terms increasing at a geometric rate.

An Englishman’s house is his castle, and although the outworks may be crumpled like tissue paper as soon as he is in open conflict with society, so long as he keeps on the windy side of the law he possesses an impregnable fortress. In the garrison’s interest and our own we need permission to enter; the question is, what shall we pay? We certainly should make our utmost endeavour to offer the minimum bribe, but in the existing state of affairs some bribery is inevitable. One thing strongly in favour of the district nurse is, that there is rarely any real need for her to give material aid. When patients have said to me, ‘I s’pose you’ve brought all as you’ll want, nurse?’ or, ‘I should think as the doctor won’t want nothing but what he brings along with him?’ my usual reply was, ‘I have brought you my ten fingers. It is astonishing how much they can do when they are supplied with the wherewithal.’ And then, in the tones of a person parting with a trade secret as a rare personal favour, I would tell them what was needed, where it could be bought or hired, and how much it would cost. My hearers stared and laughed, but seldom indeed did they fail to produce all that was necessary. Collecting implements for the doctor’s use sometimes caused a greater struggle. Half an hour before a critical operation on his wife, a man refused me the use of an absolutely indispensable basin because ‘the fowls has got to be fed’; and in similar circumstances an elderly woman declined to supply me with boiling water because ‘the gudeman must have his dinner.’ Incidents like these are exceptional, but they have to be faced.
Nor is a nurse welcome in every home. I have sometimes, at the urgent request of a medical man, visited a house as many as six times before gaining admittance, and even then it has been another fortnight before I have been allowed to perform any nursing duties. But—for my encouragement—how often I found the entrée remorselessly refused to other workers! One day, while attending to a woman who was seriously ill, I heard a constant rapping at the front door. It would have been against all etiquette for me to offer to go and see what was wanted, but when I observed that the patient was getting nervous and worried by the sound, I went to look for the husband, who had been requested to remain within call. I found him in the backyard, squeezed into the only corner which was not easily visible from the road. 'There is a lady knocking at the door.' No response. 'I think it is Mrs.—, the vicar's wife.' 'Lerrer knock, then!' he replied valiantly, 'I'm not a tome. When the missus is about, she can do's she like.' In another case a district visitor called time after time at a house, leaving and fetching tracts and magazines, but never receiving more than the curttest of greetings. One day she was welcomed with a beaming smile. 'Come right in, m'm. I'm real glad to see you. I was hoping you'd be round our way.' She had hardly time to renew her faith in copy-book maxims as to the value of perseverance, when the woman added cheerfully, 'Two of the children's down with the scarlack fever. I'd like for you to look at them.' The visitor was a married woman with young children of her own, and hastily purchased the right to decline this privilege.
‘It’s really impossible to force oneself into the houses of the poor,’ I was told by a man of leisure who was devoting himself to the inculcation of thrift in its many bearings on social life. ‘We must begin with the children. There is nothing else to be done.’ ‘The world’s progress is hindered by the belief that only the young can learn,’ I argued. ‘Suppose religious reformers had made that part of their creed? Or men of science, or politicians? Did Luther teach an infant school, or Cobden address himself to a kindergarten? How should we stand now with regard to surgery if Lister had felt hopeless of all pupils out of long-clothes? If we are engaged in teaching something entirely new and untried, the probability is that it is not true. If our doctrines are worth anything at all they are only an expansion or an application of things already known, and if clearly set forth ought to be acceptable to all rational persons, irrespective of age.’ ‘Well, but how are you going to set about it? How are you going to get hold of the people you want to teach? Ink and paper are useless with regard to most of them; as the old ballad runs, “I sent him to school and he wadna learn, I gied him books and he wadna read.” The idea of my committee—I’m chairman—was to go to people’s houses when their children left school, and say you’d come to give them a little advice about setting them out in the world. “Look here,” I said, “I’m as meek a man as you’d find between the four seas, but if a stranger came to my house on such an errand I should think him deuced impertinent, and ask him to walk out at once, or sooner. Besides, as I happen to be the father of a family, I know that setting children out in the world is an occasion for
spending, not saving." Then they started me on lecturing at parish halls and so on, the clergy undertaking to beat up the audience. Of course if one could have got hold of the right people the plan might have answered well enough. Prêcher un converti may be smooth sailing, but it isn't exhilarating, and you don't get any forrader. The first night I lectured to respectable shopkeepers, who probably knew about as much of the matter as I did, and at closer quarters. In the next parish they collected a pious kind of set, and when I had finished, a decent-looking, middle-aged man got up and asked, "What would Christ have said to Old Age Pensions?" I thought I was pretty well primed, but I could only say I didn't know. I hardly even liked to suggest that other people didn't know either, and of course the bubble of my credit was pricked. My third address was given to a more mixed audience, but still not the ones I wanted to reach. Up jumped a man and shouted, marking the points off on his fingers with as much of a bang as he could get out of them: "How is misery to be perwented? Old Age Pensions. How are you to get the money? Widen the basis of taxation. How are you to do that? Tariff Reform!" There was an awful hubbub, and I left. I heard that the argument was finished in the street, after midnight. Then I tried my hand at penny banks; but there, again, you can't get hold of the right people. What do men and women who can—and will—save a couple of shillings a week want of penny banks and patronage? They had far better join a good Friendly Society. No, I am falling back on the Council School teachers; they are the only people who can give real help in the matter. I have called on every head
teacher in the town. They all agree that Friday afternoon is a slack time—or the nearest approach to a slack time that they ever get—and nine-tenths of them have consented to tuck in a little teaching on thrift as soon as I can get a syllabus drawn up. I am also depending a good deal on women who have the patience to go round from door to door to collect pennies and twopences. I know plenty of people say, "What's the good of that? They simply wait till they have a few shillings, or perhaps a pound, and then take it all out and spend it at one go." But after all, every one saves in order to spend, or let their successors spend, and if the necessity to spend arrives sooner with people of this class it is not altogether their fault. And even if the money is sometimes drawn out to be wasted on finery and feasting, critics ought to realise what an enormous moral advance it is to save and pinch before an extravagance instead of after.'

Truly it is a difficult matter to get hold of the grown-up pupil, as I learnt from a somewhat in-cautious conversation between two clergymen who sat opposite me in a motor omnibus. There was a gap of forty years between their respective ages, but there seemed to be little or none between their methods of thought and action. 'I had an awf'ly good tip the other day about men's services,' said the younger. 'Have 'em at four. Then they 've had their dinner and their walk and don't mind turning in for an hour before they go to tea.' 'H'm, no; don't believe in it. I have them just for a preliminary canter before evening service. Tell you what, though, I 've got a capital new way of marking 'em. One for attendance, one for conduct, one for answers. That way
you don't put any premium on brains' ((profoundly disparaging accent on the last word). 'Yes, yes, I see; no, that's a rotten thing to do.'

Can one be surprised if the working-man breaks away from teaching of this type, and gives a hearing to socialists and even anarchists? How much, or little, is he to be blamed for credulity if he is left in ignorance? An uneducated man is no more unreasonable than a madman, and I have always found that madmen did exactly as I should have done myself if I had shared the belief that held possession of their minds. If a maniac believes himself to be King Edward, he naturally expects his hand to be kissed, and all his opinions listened to with deference; if he believes that he has fallen among thieves, it is reasonable that he should arm himself with a knife, or any weapon that he can manage to secrete. The working-man who believes that there are boundless stores of wealth which could be divided among the poor with great gain to them and no undue loss to any one else, is perfectly reasonable in wishing to draw upon these reserves to an indefinite extent. We must change the assumption that underlies the reasoning, or we must in some way intimidate people from acting on their belief. One method is out of date, and the other has never been given a fair trial. No one tries to give a working-man political principles meant to outlast the next polling-day, and few indeed are those who try to convince him that religion has any serious concern with his present life and its duties.

It is not only because it is difficult to effect an entry that the majority of philanthropic workers dislike going to the houses of the poor, and have an especial distaste for the necessary discipline of visiting
the same houses often and during long periods. It is sometimes because such visits force them to recognise their powerlessness to cause any great or sudden change for good; while working in a public office it may be years—or never—before they realise their power for evil.

Whether we make flank or frontal attacks upon the Englishman's Castle, or by whatever strategy we induce the garrison to listen to us, we must reconcile ourselves to a progress that is almost unbearably slow. Take the change from ungrammatical to grammatical speech as a fair example of the probable rate of advance. There is a countrywoman of about sixty-five living not far from me, who can read her Bible and hymn-book with ease and write a little. This woman has a daughter of forty, who of course came under the compulsory education act, and two of her daughter's children not only reached the giddy elevation of the Seventh Standard, but did it at such an early age that they pastured there for nearly two years. One day the grandmother was asked by a locum tenens, 'Who cleans the chancel?' She replied, 'Well, he don't often be washed, but when he do be washed, I washes he.' Either of her grandchildren would frame an answer on exactly similar lines, and the only verbal change would be the substitution of it for he. The girl might also use isn't in place of don't, but, on the other hand, after working for two or three years with older men, the lad will probably revert to the use of he. The grandmother was once kind enough to appear at a mother's meeting on a very wet day, and said she had done it because she feared that few members would be there and 'just to encourage the new lady.' She bade fare-
well to the locum tenens and his wife at the end of their year's residence in these terms: 'Us be sorry you 'm going. Us be getting used to 'ee.' Being experienced workers, they accepted these compliments gratefully. A lady whose family had worked hard in one neighbourhood for over thirty years said to me:

'No, we do not understand the people, but I think they are beginning to understand us. They would not believe anything very bad against us entirely without evidence.' Blessed are they whose benevolence can be nourished on such Spartan diet!

A favourite method of attacking the Englishman's Castle has always been to lure the younger part of the garrison out for instruction, religious and secular, modified by plum buns. Even Hannah More, who did not allow the poor to learn writing, provided plum buns and bonnets. At the present day they are enticed out to be taught to play, and this change of tactics, although arising from a change of circumstances, is not altogether profitable. Children who have been wisely educated can amuse themselves, while those who have been deliberately taught to play cannot enjoy themselves without an audience. One summer evening not long ago I was sitting in the park of a provincial town. It was almost empty, but a group of little girls between eight and twelve years of age were playing burglars and policemen with many realistic and unpleasant details. They were evidently working up to the hanging of the burglar, when the lady who was with me interfered by exclaiming, 'Surely you little girls know a prettier game than that! Does not even one of you know a game that she can teach the others?' Childlike, they made no verbal reply, but joining hands they
began an old English singing game. In the course of half an hour they went through every game of the kind that I knew, and several that I had never heard before, and danced with grace and spirit. But they could only do it for an audience: directly we turned away, burglar and policeman reappeared.

I am apt to look at children's public entertainments too exclusively from the struggling housemother's point of view, but outsiders are so much in the habit of forgetting her, and unconsciously teaching her offspring to do the same, that the apparent one-sidedness is merely an attempt to bring about a fair balance. Knowing how much washing and drying and mangling and ironing she has to do already, it does not please me to find added to the list the sailor suits, the gymnasium dresses, and the white dancing frocks and stockings and shoes which will be so much admired by aristocratic patronesses and newspaper reporters. Knowing how many hours a day the children of a useful age necessarily spend at school, getting ready to go there, and walking to and fro, it seems hard to me, that instead of being willing to do a little housework, or go errands, or play about within call and 'mind' the younger ones, they return wild with excitement to be washed and dressed and start off again as soon as possible. Needless to say, these scenes do not occur in miserably poor homes, for there, even if (as is often the case) the costumes are provided by charity, the mother could not possibly spend money on extra soap and starch and firing; nor do they occur in the unhappy homes that one would so thankfully do something to brighten. They happen in the homes of thrifty and indulgent parents just above the poverty line, and in many instances where the children are well-housed and could perfectly
well amuse themselves at home, even in the winter. Left to themselves, children are indeed ‘pleased with a rattle, tickled with a straw’; but make them the centre of attention, and the wide world is too narrow for them. I once asked a prosperous solicitor, the devoted father of two little boys, if he was going to take them out to see the annual display of fireworks on the village common. He shook his head: ‘I did an awfully foolish thing last year. The sight of a dozen rockets was such a joy to the children that I could not resist taking them up to the Crystal Palace one night. They enjoyed it wildly, but now the little beggars simply, despise the local shows. I ought to have waited another five years. I feel as if I had robbed them.’

There is another thing that must be remembered: children’s attendance at Sunday school is almost entirely optional, and they will not go unless they have what they consider proper clothes. If the mother cannot provide these fancy-dresses in addition, it will rest with the children to decide whether Sunday school is to be abandoned or not. I know very well that children learn little at Sunday-school that is of any immediate use to them, and as I have found this to be the case all my life and among all sects, I conclude that it is impossible to shorten the barbarous irresponsibility of normal childhood without encouraging a precocity that has to be paid for at an usurious rate of interest. Or are the teachers partly to blame that the seed is so slow in germinating? One day last winter an old Irish lady was telling me of a certain clergyman who ‘explained the Scriptures so plainly to children and people of all ages, that no one could fail to understand.’ I thought I had at last heard
of some one who knew how to bridge over the gulf between knowledge and action more rapidly, until she continued with the intimate regret of a person who has missed a great intellectual pleasure, 'The winter I left, he was expounding so beautifully all the beasts of the Bible!' However this may be, I have abundant proof in the daily lives of men and women of all ages, and often their unsought verbal testimony, that what they have learnt at Sunday school has a powerful influence upon them, and helps them in their duties as parents, as neighbours, and as citizens. It has yet to be proved that Maypole dancing, or associated games, or amateur pantomimes, would have this effect.

Faith in regular visiting among the poor, especially among those who are in no immediate material need, seems to have dwindled of late years, and it is to be regretted, for the visitors at any rate learnt something of the conditions of working-women's lives, and had some appreciation of their difficulties. The member of the garrison that I am most anxious to lure out is the mother, and I am frankly desirous that in her case it should be more for amusement than instruction. She often knows so much already: what is needed is that she should be sent home with a lighter heart and a gayer temper so that her efforts may be made with more courage and meet with more success. Personally I have only tried to teach her, and I have always found her quick and eager to learn, slow to forget. From want of leisure I have been obliged to give the lessons at hours that cannot always have been convenient to the husband. Once I asked, 'Is your husband willing that you should come?' and received the touching reply, 'He says he'll only be too thankful if I can learn how to keep other women from
suffering as I had to suffer.' I wish I could always be certain that the marital speeches reported to me have really been made; even when the wives are too truthful to consciously invent them, I fancy that what I am told on Wednesday was said by the wife on Monday and dutifully repeated by the husband on Tuesday.

Not many years ago an old lady reproached with excessive indulgence of her servants, replied, 'Poor things! If they are not happy now, when will they be? They will all be married before long!' and this was the common attitude and lament of tender-hearted mistresses. Although poor women rarely owned that matrimony was an unhappy estate, they generally abjured, from the very day of their marriage, all pleasures but those of a strictly domestic nature. This frame of mind is still found among the older women, but an unmistakable change is coming over the younger ones. A Londoner who had been married about ten years recently brought it as a heavy charge against a young friend's husband, 'He's never taken her anywhere, not since they've been married, and the change is too sudden for her. She's always had a day out every two or three months, and she misses it.'

This change of habits demands a corresponding change in dress, and is no doubt connected with a general rise of wages. I know two purely agricultural villages, the average wages in one being about 17s., and in the other 15s., the climate and general conditions of life being about the same. In the first village nearly every woman has complete outdoor clothing both for summer and winter, while in the second only a small minority ever go beyond their garden
gate. With regard to the children's dress there is practically no difference, and in the men's it is much less marked, showing that the mother is always served last; or rather, that she makes it a point of honour to serve herself last, for when wages are as low as that, every man with the faintest idea of doing his duty hands them over to her almost intact.

The amusements of half-grown lads are poorly provided for in most working-class homes, and any help given in teaching them to pass their leisure hours satisfactorily, or even harmlessly, is well expended. At the same time, care must be taken not to foster expensive tastes and create a standard of expectations which the life of a decent married workman can never meet. Let people of moderate means remember what they have suffered, and seen their equals suffer, from sons spoilt by the pleasures and luxuries of mess-rooms, hotels, and clubs, and beware of spreading a fruitless discontent among working lads, instead of arousing modest ambition and encouraging independence in all attempts at its realisation.

Philanthropic clubs should only provide those amusements for which the taste will naturally die away as youth passes, and the founders and patrons should try to implant and cultivate interests that will last for a lifetime, and spread a knowledge of rational occupations which can be carried on in any decent home. A 'Parish Club,' if much frequented by married men, causes far more family disunion than the ordinary alehouse. I knew one young wife, a bright, intelligent, pleasant-tempered girl of twenty-two, left alone evening after evening, while her teetotal husband, whose daily employment was by no means of a monotonous or disagreeable nature,
played games at his club. This man had been 'under Church influences' all his life, and if he was incapable of amusing himself at home, the 'gentlemen from Cambridge,' a long succession of whom had patronised him from his earliest boyhood, can scarcely be considered successful in their efforts to 'refine' him.

In organising clubs, great consideration needs to be paid to the nature of the daily employment of the average member. I have known so much effort wasted in stirring up country lads, thoroughly fatigued by their long day's work in the open air, to play cricket and football, and in repressing the exuberance of town lads who have spent nine or ten hours at some sedentary occupation, and are then asked to amuse themselves with improving books and mechanical drawing. I remember one poor boy who diversified a 'popular' lecture by fixing upright pins in the seats, and when caught in the act and remonstrated with, said in self-justificatory tones, 'Yer muss 'ave er bit of er lark sometimes!' All this seems glaringly simple; only repeated experiences can induce one to believe that it is possible for the founders of clubs to overlook anything so elementary.

As a district nurse I was brought into contact with a melancholy side of holiday-making. When typhoid fever was suspected, the first question that experience dictated to me was, 'Have you been to a school-treat, bean-feast, etc.? ' Many people, when they see a dozen brakes full of children in cotton frocks and shoddy suits starting off on a showery day, feel a passing pang of pity—but only for the children's disappointment. They know nothing of the long train of illnesses that follow in the wake of that 'happy day.' No treat for children, girls, or
women should ever be arranged without an alternative wet-day programme. I know this would mean cost and labour, but so do the haphazard plans in vogue. The only difference is that the trouble and expense now fall on persons in no way responsible for these defective arrangements, and in many cases the children's sufferings result in some lasting disability. When we are more completely civilised all children will take their pleasures as so many of them do now, under the guardianship of their parents, and not in wild, half-tended hordes. In the meantime, the benevolent people who organise treats should try and grasp that their responsibilities are heavier than they imagine.

With regard to the risks of boarding out children for a summer holiday, several recent prosecutions have drawn attention to dangers which ought to have been plainly visible to all who know the ordinary conditions of village life, and especially of the homes poor enough to be willing to receive these boarders. As I seldom enter a house when it is entirely free from illness, I have seldom come across any of these children, but I well remember two boys sent to a most undesirable person living in a narrow and crowded street in a small town, and the woman's angry complaints that she found it impossible to 'fill' them at 5s. a head, and the injustice of expecting her to do it for 'great lads' whose father's wages, she had discovered, were nearly double those of her husband. The town was close to a moor, and the boys, according to the advertisement, spent their days drinking in its life-giving breezes. A harmless programme, if they carried it out. I only know that they spent as short a time as possible within reach of
that rasping voice and bitter tongue, and that they were left to their own devices from morning till night.

Filial piety is such a comparatively undeveloped virtue among the poorest classes, that in the interest of the aged there is special need of entry to their homes, and for a long time to come this necessity will be increased by the Old Age Pensions Act. A much larger number of old people will now be received by their married children, and will be retained even if they fall into a state of complete helplessness or imbecility, and, naturally, it is not among the moral élite that this increase will be most marked, for their aged parents are already with them, or living so close at hand as to be practically under their charge. The increase will be chiefly caused by the great numbers of sons and daughters who will now, in the hope of a trivial gain, do what no other motive would induce.

"If the safety and happiness of many of the penniless old people now in existence were the first consideration, great improvements would be made in the management of workhouses, especially in the direction of allowing more freedom. I fail to see why well-conducted paupers over seventy years of age should not be allowed to walk in and out during all the hours of daylight almost as freely as if they lived in an almshouse, nor why they should not receive visitors of all classes for a couple of hours every afternoon. The usual plea for the restraint exercised is that greater liberty would lead to drunkenness, but very few people of that age are, or could be, drunkards, and if they were to be seen in the streets every day instead of once a week, or once a fortnight, the kindly meant folly of 'standing treat' would come to a
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18

natural end.

I

know a workhouse where a man

seventy-four and a
in the same ward.

man

of

were confined
The first had earned his living
until he was seventy-three, when a long illness
exhausted his savings. He belonged by birth to the
farming class, had received a grammar-school education, and was refined and intelligent, but of a rather
bitter disposition.
He had never been married, and
had no relatives or friends who could assist him substantially, but he had many respectable acquaintances
who would have welcomed him to a meal, or an hour's
chat.
The older man had earned his living until he
was eighty-two. He had been a widower for many
years, and his children had emigrated and disappeared. He was the son of a shopkeeper, had been
well taught until he was fourteen or fifteen, and was
an omnivorous reader. These two men hated one
another virulently, and heartily despised all the other
old people, labourers who could scarcely read, but
except for one half-day a week they had not the
smallest change or relief from one another's society.
The life was a mental torture, and their hatred grew
until the younger man with no immediate provocation violently assaulted the elder, and the master
could only restore and maintain peace by threatening
to place him among the able-bodied paupers if he
repeated the offence. Soon afterwards the aggressor
died suddenly. The letter in which his antagonist
informed me of his death was a curiosity of Hterature
he felt that his joy was indecent, and tried so unavailingly not to express it.
One of their bitterest quarrels had unluckily been
originated by an unexpected call that I had paid at
the workhouse, an attention which each claimed as

—

of eighty-five

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having been primarily intended for himself. If the matter had been laid before me at once, I might possibly have been able to smooth it over, but I was not questioned by either of them until six or seven weeks later, and in the meantime three men, one deaf, one blind, and one a decidedly malicious imbecile, had been allowed to give evidence as to my intentions, which they had deduced from 'the turns I had took' when I entered the building—the said turns having in reality been directed by the matron's new maid, who did not understand what I wanted. After that, all the diplomatists in Europe could not have disentangled the imbroglio.

Perhaps the history of the younger of these two men may be of use to those who fail to realise that all the problems connected with old age poverty cannot be solved by the provision of a 5s. pension. When I first knew him he was a little over seventy, and lived in a two-roomed, gardenless cottage for which he paid 1s. 6d. a week. He found occasional work as a gardener, was employed by the small farmers during busy seasons, and had a town allotment two miles away. About eighteen months later his health began to break, and he sold all his remaining possessions, including some handsome old silver, and took a single furnished room in the town close to his allotment. All through the following year I heard nothing of him, but one warm morning in April he appeared at my house, very thin and worn, and in an over-wrought and excited condition. He seemed to me in actual want of food, and I made him eat and drink before telling me his business. A wineglassful of whisky and water brought back a little colour to his lips, and the nervous stammer gave place to his usual deliberate
speech. He drew a paper from an old leathern pocket-book and passed it over to me:

‘I’ve come to ask you a favour. Read that. Eight years I’ve paid my rent regularly for that scrap of ground, and a good rent too, and now because I’m behindhand with it for once they threaten to take it away unless I pay before the end of the month. They’re trying all they know to force me into the workhouse. It’s that B— who’s at the back of it. J.P. indeed! Him! What are we coming to? Half the winter I was ill, and the other half not good for much, and at the beginning of the season I had only a few shillings left. I spent them in seed, and now they want to rob me. But it’s the feeling, the bad feeling in the letter that hurt me. They know my circumstances, but not one scrap of consideration do they show.’

I looked at the pallid skin and hollow temples, and it needed no prophet to tell me that his working days were over. Still, if it wounded him less to owe the money to me than to the Corporation, why should I hesitate to spare him one last humiliation? Probably he had never tried to borrow money before, as he took his success entirely as a matter of course, thanked me laconically and went on his way.

The next day I met the Guardian and J.P. whom the old man believed to be ‘at the back of’ the letter he had shown me, and gave voice to his suspicions. Rather to my surprise I received a frank acknowledgment that they were well-founded.

‘I am trying to force him into the House. What else can I do? The man has been on my mind for years. He is the most impracticable person imaginable to deal with. Secrecy has become a mania with
him. I'll give you an example: While he was living
out in that cottage near you there was a vacancy in
the Almshouses, and we elected him. It was all
settled, except for one formality which, according to
the statutes, has to be gone through: the elected
person must tell the trustees exactly what his means
are. He flatly declined to do it. We argued with
him for a long time, and then after consulting the
others I said we could stretch a point in his favour
as far as this; he could choose any three of us and
tell us under pledge of secrecy. He refused, and the
thing fell through. It would have been a decent
maintenance for him. Now he wants us to grant
outdoor relief, but what is the use of half-a-crown a
week to a friendless old bachelor brought up as he
was? Well I remember, when I was a little lad of
eight or nine, how I used to run to the end of the lane
to see him start out for a day's hunting, the best
horse and the best dressed man at the meet! About
five years ago we had a somewhat similar case, and
the man actually starved to death, verdict brought
in by the Coroner. We don't want another scandal
of that kind, let alone the inch by inch cruelty of it.'

'Who was his father?' I asked. 'His father farmed
a couple of hundred acres. You know that's considered
a big farm in this part of the world. When Trowers
was forty or more his father went bankrupt and died
soon after. No, bankrupt isn't the word; there was
a little money for the daughter, enough to last until
they got her a small pension from the Farmers'
Association, and he had part of the furniture, but
there wasn't a farthing of capital for him to stock a
farm. You know you can't get into even a very inferior
one under £600. Well, there he was stranded, fit
for nothing but a day labourer, and not very fit for that. This working of fathers and sons together is the ruin of hundreds. It turns out badly in more ways than I could tell you.'

'The custom struck me favourably when I first came into this neighbourhood. I thought it showed such unusually strong family feeling.'

'Unusual lack of common sense! What does it mean at the present moment among men farming between ten and eighty or a hundred acres? It means that in return for being able to take a day's holiday when they choose, and going late to work as often as they feel inclined, and being their own masters generally, young men in vigorous health and with some education and ability give themselves up to work as farm labourers. Hundreds of men are doing it who ought to emigrate before they are five-and-twenty, or else work hard for a stranger, get decent wages and save. If a draper or a tailor wants his son to learn the business, what does he do? Apprentices him where his nose will be kept to the grindstone, and does the same himself for some other man's son. Stay where you are and do as you please is a rotten system for any lad. Well, it's done in poor Trowers' case and can't be undone. I hope he will be in the House for good by this time next month. Of course I shall speak to the master and ask him to be a little deaf at times, and let him down as easily as he can. Trowers has a tongue that would raise a blister on cast-iron.'

But the old man was by no means conquered yet; he moved into another town, where he struggled and starved, and some months later was literally carried to the Infirmary, apparently in a dying condition.
There proved to be little the matter with him except lack of food, but to break the sense of sudden captivity he was kept among the invalids for many weeks. When I heard that he had been moved into the old men's ward, I wrote and asked him to come out and see me on the next leave day.

Even the workhouse clothing could not altogether disguise him; there was a carriage of the head and shoulders and a shapeliness of the hands never found among those who have done hard manual work before their growing days are over. He was in fairly good spirits, and unlike my other guests from the Union had no complaints to make of any one.

The visit was not repeated, and hearing that he was ailing I went to see him. I found the workhouse in great confusion; alterations and enlargements were going on, with the temporary but inconvenient result that eleven aged persons lived in one room day and night. Used as a dormitory alone it would have been sufficiently large, but to make room for chairs and table the beds had to be placed in a double row, the head of one separated from the foot of the other by about twelve inches. The place was heated by a dismal, black stove; from force of habit the old men sat in a semicircle facing it, but not the faintest gleam of light could be seen.

Trowers was in bed; he had only a single pillow, and he seemed to be cold and to have difficulty in breathing; half of his day-clothes were rolled up for a bolster, and half spread over his feet. There was a raging draught from a ventilator striking on his head, protected only by a red handkerchief.

"It's influenza, nothing but that," he said feebly.

"I've been attending on the sick, and I caught it."
The doctor says I had better move into the infirmary before night.'

'It will be more comfortable for you there, I hope.'

He waved away my sympathy with something of his old air. 'I do very well here, very well indeed; but my cough cannot be pleasant for the others, and it is more convenient for the doctor to have all his patients together.'

I never saw him again, although he did not die until a year later. I believe that a few friends came forward and saved him from a pauper's funeral, or rather saved themselves from witnessing it. It was a matter as to which he had never expressed the smallest concern.

I was speaking to a nurse whose experiences among the poor had been less happy than mine, and she said, 'Talk of the death-rate of infants! I should like to know how many old fathers and mothers and aunts and grandmothers are allowed to slip out of the world before their time, even pushed out? If you come to think of it, two out of the three strongest motives for getting rid of young children—greed and laziness—are as strong in one case as in the other, and there is far less to balance them. People seem so wonderfully pleased with the death-rate, excepting for the first twelve months of life, but in my opinion the rate is higher at every age than it need be, even granting our present state of ignorance and bad housing, and as long as this culpable waste goes on, I decline to bother my head about those who aren't born, but who, some old bachelor says, ought to be!'

A few months before this I had heard that an old widower of seventy-eight was seriously ill, and went to inquire for him. He lived with his daughter, was
in receipt of outdoor relief, earned about four shillings a week, and cultivated a good-sized garden. I found his daughter at the wash-tub; she wiped her arms with no more care than those useful members deserved, but with far more than they usually received. It was evidence of embarrassment; her conscience was clear, but 'gentry,' especially such small gentry as myself, have notoriously 'unreasonable' views with regard to the treatment of elderly parents.

'He's been took to the infirmary, m'm, and I doubt if he'll ever be about again. He's been breaking up these many months. He could work for you well enough, it being so close at hand, and him being able to come just when he felt able and leave off if he was a bit queer, and it did seem to keep his spirits up, like. But he went down to work at Talmages, and they don't allow no one in their kitchen, and it was too cold for he to eat his bit dinner outdoors, and too far for he to come back home, so he worked nearly six hours straight on end. Comin' back he felt bad, and though it were raining he set down to rest hisself under a hedge. Timmins was passing in his cart and picked un up, but he couldn't bring un home at once because he was bound to go by Broughes, and he'd nothing but a sack to put around him, and that he took off his own shoulders, and father caught a bad chill. I had un a-bed for a week, and then I did send for the doctor, and then he was a-bed another week, and then doctor did say he'd be more comforable in the infirmary. We 've no fire-place, as you know, m'm, not in neither of the two bedrooms.'

'I am afraid it must have been a great blow to your father. He valued his independence above all things,
and struggled so hard to keep out of the Big House, as he called it.'

'If the doctor could ha' said it would be the last break-up I wouldn't ha' let him go, but he did say he might last for months and years, and how could I do with un here all that time?'

I was glad that the doctor had at any rate not practised the pious fraud by which men of his profession so often try to extort a little indulgence for feeble old parents. Like all other frauds, it not only fails but has to be heavily paid for. There is one piece of advice which, as a district nurse, I longed to bestow upon medical men, and that is, 'Never promise that a patient will die soon.'

I went to the workhouse to make further inquiries. It was not visiting day, and while I was trying to arrange the matter with the porter the master came out.

'I am afraid you cannot see him. The fact is, the doctor is not quite certain what is wrong with him, and left orders that he was to be kept perfectly quiet. With all due respect to the doctor, I do not think there is any immediate danger, but one can never be certain. Left where they are accustomed to be, they last about three times as long as a medical man would expect; brought here, they often die before any one suspects what they are about. If Thomas gets over the shock and lives through the first week, he may last for years. I know him well. Always a steady, hard-working man, but he had the misfortune to lose his wife six or eight years ago. Two old people can struggle along, but one left alone gets pushed under by the younger generation. Oh, if he pulls round a bit he 'll find several of his own sort
to associate with. Men of that age are kept pretty well apart from the others. But they’re a bit sour, poor old chaps. It isn’t exactly that they think the world has served them badly; they seem to take all that pretty much as it comes. It’s the dullness that tells on them, especially when they get past doing their little bit of work. Sometimes they think to spite me by giving it up, and quote the regulations about “no person over seventy years of age,” but in two days or less they are bothering me to give it back to them.’

‘Do you think that old people ought not to be brought into the workhouse?’ I asked.

‘It depends—it depends,’ he replied, with a wealth of meaning in his voice, and I suddenly remembered inquiries that I had recently been making into the circumstances of the death of a dear old woman who had once worked for me for several weeks. The daughter of the doctor who had attended her told me, ‘Father was much distressed about it. There was nothing definite, nothing that he could take hold of, but he was convinced that her children just let her slip away for want of nourishment. She had a touch of pneumonia, nothing much, and he had no expectation whatever of a fatal ending.’ The poor woman, who had been a most devoted mother, and nine of whose sons and daughters had reached maturity, was not dependent upon her children, but her little income allowed no margin of profit. And I also remembered a little girl of less than five years old, who had always lived in very poor districts, who said to me on one occasion with playful ferocity, ‘I won’t till oo, I’ll let oo die!’—an idea which certainly could not have originated in her own mind.
True social reformers undoubtedly aim at developing the conception of home life until old age holds as natural a place in it as childhood. The home where one cannot be born, cannot play, cannot learn, cannot be ill, cannot grow old, cannot die, is not worthy to be called a home, but we have many a hill to climb before the worthy possibilities of working-class life can be fully realised, and in the meantime age needs to be as jealously protected as youth. No pressure should ever be put upon old persons to induce them to live with those who may be their ‘natural protectors,’ but who are not so in reality. I sadly remember a poor old friend removed, utterly against her wish, from the infirmary where her shrewd, humorous, lively spirit found endless friends, amusement, and occupation, and immured for eight years in a narrow slip of a bedroom in her son’s house, where her sole diversions were a weekly visit from the district nurse and occasional calls from two pedlars, one a Jew, the other a Roman Catholic. She was of the straitest sect of Baptists, and the men both indulged her with as much religious argument as she chose, and to fill up the gap during their absence would leave her a sheaf of old illustrated newspapers or torn magazines. The Salvation Army barracks were close at hand, and the officers would gladly have done something to relieve the tedium of her captivity, but their methods were too rough and elementary, and she shrank from them with a silent aversion strangely different from her merry war with the grimy pedlars. Once, however, when they were in a quiet mood, and sang hymns that she had known as a girl, she mistook them for ‘Wesleys,’ and was touched even to tears.

But at least she received a certain amount of attend-
ance from her family, and was allowed the uncontrolled disposition of her allowance from the Union, although her son was paying a high rent and had many young children. Another poor old friend who would have been far happier in the workhouse received out-relief at the rate of 2s. 6d. a week, and lived with her married son in the house that he had just built for himself. She furnished a small room for which she paid him 1s. a week, and had to provide herself with food, fuel, and clothing on the remaining 1s. 6d. The son had property in addition to this house, was earning at least 30s. a week, and had only two children, one of whom was partly independent. This woman was seventy-six before she turned to either son or parish for assistance, and was in no way responsible for her poverty.

Neither of these cases were as pitiable as that of a widowed patient I had in another district. During a severe illness which had passed into a chronic stage before I knew her, her worthless son-in-law had made away with all that she possessed, savings sufficient to have kept her in decent comfort as long as she lived. After this outbreak, the man was converted by the Salvation Army, but only from drunkenness and unemployment; the conversion did not include the barest civility to the penniless woman, who now had to draw an allowance from the parish and share his home, together with his wife and their child, a girl of sixteen, whose insolence was a greater trial than the son’s brutality or the daughter’s hard indifference. Although I had seen the woman often, I never realised the misery of the life she led in that clean, prosperous-looking house, until one day when a mixture that I was preparing for her boiled over, splashing the polished
stove and whitened hearth. I said lightly, 'What
disgrace we shall get into with your daughter' (a
woman who had always treated me with extreme
deference), and turning to receive the smiling dis-
claimer which is the usual reply to such a speech, I
c caught a look of abject fear on her face; no child of
seven could have been more terrified. I induced her
to tell me where the blacklead brushes and whitening
were kept, and repaired the damage. After that we
visited her more frequently, and by constant nursing
attendance removed the pretext for much of the
unkindness with which she was treated.

In yet another instance a woman of ninety was
treated with such harshness that I was obliged to
report the matter to the relieving-officer. While
human nature remains what it is, no one system will
ever meet the needs of the whole garrison of the
Englishman's Castle. Few of those who voted for
Old Age Pensions can have realised the dangers to
which they were exposing their clients, or they would
at least have provided some superintendent and
protector whose powers and knowledge corresponded
with those of the modern and most humanely disposed
relieving-officer.

Among educated people I have often heard it said,
'I may have been fond of my parents when I was
young, I hope I was; but I am sure that I never really
appreciated them until I had children of my own.'
Among the poor, except in the instinctive clinging to
the mother in times of sickness and trouble, the
marriage of the younger generation commonly loosens
its bonds with the older. In all cases where I have
found filial piety highly developed, the dutiful children
have been persons of strong religious feeling. I knew
one middle-aged man, the father of a large, dependent family, who at the close of his day's work went every evening to see his feeble old parents, in order to read to them and tell them the news, and do the necessary shopping, cooking, and cleaning. This daily succour enabled them to receive outdoor relief, instead of being compelled to enter the hated Union. They lived in a little cottage on the other side of the river, and if the man could have afforded to pay the ferry, he need only have walked two miles, but as he had to go round by the nearest bridge the distance was nearly five.

So far from making a merit of this daily toil, he sedulously concealed it from his employers, kind-hearted people who were troubled by his worn and delicate appearance, fearing that he was developing consumption, and they knew nothing of it until the long strain was over and they congratulated him on the sudden improvement in his health.

He was an ardent Baptist, and the fear and horror—and pleasurable excitement—of his life was Roman Catholicism. On one occasion he heard that his master's daughter was going to attend a ceremony at the Pro-Cathedral, and earnestly remonstrated with her. Failing to convince her of the iniquity of the proceeding, he said in blood-curdling accents, 'Miss, if I was to go there myself, I 'd be afraid to look around me. There 'd be devils grinning from behind every pillar.'
II

THE PLEASURES OF THE POOR

It is commonly stated that the working-classes as a whole demand more and more of what are somewhat strangely termed 'associated pleasures.' My acquaintances among the poor, and they are numerous, live almost entirely without these pleasures: they seldom enter theatre, dancing saloon, music hall, or concert room; they seem to have little or no connection with the vast crowds hanging round football and cricket matches, or on the outskirts of racecourses; they are not often to be found listening to improving lectures, nor attending political meetings, nor crowding into police-courts, and except very early and very late in life, they are not even regular attendants at church or chapel. Such enjoyments as they have seem to me to be of an entirely domestic nature; if not 'sacred' they are at least 'home-felt delights,' and most of them can be savoured in solitude, or at any rate in solitude à deux.

Strong sensation of almost any description is among the chief pleasures of the poor, and it is for this reason that at certain periods newspapers are largely bought by persons who would not dream of buying them regularly, as so many workmen and elderly persons of both sexes do, for the sake of their
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general contents. 'If there's a good murder,' a woman told me in South London, 'every one's out with their penny or their halfpenny, whether they can afford it or whether they can't,' and a respectable old person nearly treble her age said frankly, 'I do enjoy a good murder, especially when there's a long trial after.' In many large towns the evening paper rarely fails to be of a sufficiently exciting type to fill the yawning gap between supper and bed. A friend of mine, knowing that her cook's mother lived alone on a small parish allowance, eked out by what her daughter could give her, said, 'You can have my daily paper for your mother if you like to take it to her. I have always finished with it by three or four.' 'Oh,' was the indifferent reply, 'mother always haves her evenin' paper. She wouldn't sleep without it.'

If the scene of the murder is not in England men take comparatively little interest in it, but women (though warned off foreign politics even by the professed admirers of their 'Potential faculty in everything') are more cosmopolitan, and if it should be double or treble, or peculiarly atrocious in character, it will excite their attention almost as much as if it were in the next street. There is a tragic story, usually dated from some village in Hungary spelled with a haphazard arrangement of the letters c, z, and h, which has reappeared every few years as far back as my memory reaches. A young child throws a bank-note into the fire. The father, in sudden rage, stuns it with a fearful blow on the head. The mother snatches up the helpless body and runs into the open air to try and restore consciousness, but finds that life is extinct. Returning to the hut, she discovers that the baby has fallen into a tub of water and is
drowned. The father, overcome with remorse, immediately hangs himself, and the mother becomes raving mad. Sometimes the bank-note takes the more probable form of a lottery ticket, but there are few other variations. Women have assured me that they have ‘cried by the hour’ over this relation. Curiously enough, an American murder creates very little excitement; there seems to be a damping undercurrent of thought that perhaps it is ‘only their fun.’

The more educated people are, the more sensitive their imagination becomes, and the smaller the dose of sensationalism needed to excite it. We all like to be moved, lifted, not perhaps out of our grooves, if we are fortunate enough to have any, but out of the consciousness of the sticky soil of our daily lives. This is what the poor ask also, and the violence of the sensation demanded does not prove the hardness of their heart, but the dullness of their imagination.

Revengefulness is not a marked or common trait among the English poor, and is rarely fostered against members of their own class, but one cannot deny that in certain parts of the country a large amount of pleasure is derived from actual and imaginary, but chiefly imaginary, paying off of old scores. ‘Men’s always sayin’ they’ll punch other men’s heads, or wring their necks round,’ said a pretty young girl impatiently, ‘and then they don’t do nothing of the kind!’ ‘Surely that shows their wisdom?’ I suggested, but she agreed very reluctantly. In a county where fewer threats are made and more are carried out, and where a grudge is remembered and nourished for twenty or thirty years, a woman told me that her mother, who would now be about seventy-
five years of age, had once attended a public execution, and had gone a day’s journey by road in order to do so. Involuntarily I expressed horror, forgetting that all mothers are above and beyond criticism, and she explained reprovingly, 'Mother knew the man that was murdered, so she had to go. His friends expected it.'

Under the long reign of law, 'wild justice,' and the fierce joy of executing it, are dying out, but traces can always be found even among the most gently-bred children, and among all the aged who are of an uncultivated type, or whose brain-power has become weakened. It is, in fact, one of the many bonds and resemblances between the two extremes of life which cause them, as Sir Thomas More said, 'to delight extravagantly the one in the other.' The old man in the workhouse who can draw down a reproof from master or matron upon the head of a comrade is as much pleased as a spiteful child.

Notwithstanding all that cynics say, there are wage-earners who take real pleasure in work, even in work that they are paid for doing, but it must be owned that they are not an overwhelming majority. In a county proverbial for laziness, self-praise, and procrastination, I asked a member of an old resident family how any work was ever done at all, and he replied, 'Oh, they don't mind doing other people's work. To do what you are engaged to do is slavery, but to do another man's work for him raises your self-esteem, and you enjoy it. A roundabout way, but we should never get through without it.'

Denigration affords intense and unbounded pleasure among the poor, but, strictly speaking, it is not malicious, at any rate with regard to members of
their own class, for they expect the hearer to make his own abatements, and will never be 'held to' what they say, while there are certain things of which they will rarely accuse one another. Mrs. A (and Mr. A, for that matter !) has often, in the deepest confidence, told me hair-raising tales of Mrs. B, and has solemnly abjured all further acquaintance with a bad neighbour, wife, and mother. A few days later I have found her, with Mr. A's consent, performing offices for Mrs. B, which the prospect of canonisation would not induce many of us to perform for our dearest and most respected friends, and Mrs. A and I, better bred than the traditional augurs, have looked at one another without the faintest gleam of a secret understanding. Last week is simply non-existent. What are a few idle words on either side that they should separate neighbours in the hour of need and peril?

With regard to employers of all classes an enormous amount of calumny finds ready currency; how much of it is really believed by those who repeat it, or even by those who originate it, it would be difficult to say. In one district, where men and women alike readily threw up their employment on the lightest of pretexts, I asked an old inhabitant, 'Without a character, how do they manage to get fresh places so easily?' 'Oh, they never trouble about a character of their own,' he replied, 'they take away their employer's instead.' Every one whom I asked agreed that this was the local custom. I have observed it in other places, but no employer seemed to suspect that he, personally, was one of the victims.

An acquaintance of mine engaged as an under-servant a certain Maud who had had a long succession
of what my patients call ‘little places with half-ladies,’ and had invariably been dismissed for ‘cheek’ at the end of a few days. Her mother, after landing her safely, returned with such an account of the glories of the situation that her husband, who was a railway guard and prided himself on having ‘a notion of things,’ reproved her for her folly in placing the girl where she would inevitably be ‘shot out’ with more than usual celerity. The entire change of surroundings, however, subdued Maud’s natural tendency to impertinence, while in many ways she was subject to less irritation than in her former situations, and she remained for two years. At the end of that time, for reasons which had no connection with the girl, her mistress gave her a month’s notice, parting with her on perfectly amicable terms and making her several presents. As time went on, she was faintly surprised that no one applied for the girl’s character, but concluded that some one in a hurry for a servant had taken her on trust. Years afterwards, when Maud was a wife and a mother, the explanation was given to her, not out of malice, but as a tremendous joke by another married woman who had been in her service for seven or eight years and appreciated the full absurdity of the tale. It appeared that Maud, who had much enjoyed the pride and novelty of being in high favour with her father, had shirked telling her family that she had received notice to leave until she was obliged to account for her sudden arrival. The tale she told was that her mistress had ordered her to whitewash the back kitchen, that she had refused, and her mistress had slapped her face, that she had then for the first time ‘given cheek,’ and had been compelled to leave almost immediately.
This remarkable invention, only held together by the family belief in her boundless powers of 'imperence,' was fully accepted; the uselessness of applying to the mistress for a character seemed clear, and she found a place without one, and kept it until her marriage to a very superior man. The father, although believing the tale, always maintained that the calumniated mistress 'had been the making of 'er.' This is, of course, a very mild specimen, being merely the childish invention of a good-natured girl brought up in decent surroundings; more malice and a much more varied knowledge of evil account for many of the libels that gain wide circulation and general credence.

Self-praise is the milder side of denigration, and self-pity (often in the disguise of self-criticism) comes between the two. Men and women alike especially delight to praise their own easy good-nature and the way in which it is imposed on by the worthless, their inborn tendency to get the worst of every bargain, their integrity, and their ceaseless industry, 'not an idle bone in me!' I recollect one old woman whose spinster daughter worked for her some sixteen hours a day. The mother, although in excellent health, never left her easy-chair by the fireside, except twice a week when she made a supply of bad bread and worse cakes, but I seldom saw her without hearing her heave a disparaging sigh, pointed by a glance at her devoted slave, and exclaim from the depths of her capacious chest, 'What they'll do when I'm gone, Lord only knows!'

Another virtue constantly claimed by the speakers and denied to their neighbours is that of wise economy. Men most frequently accuse one another of eating and drinking too much, while the favourite charge
brought by women against women is that of being careless with their clothes. They are not wrong in buying them, but in wearing them. It is not extravagant to have an expensively furnished parlour, but to make any use of it is unpardonable. 'Now there's Lizabuth,' one worthy woman used to tell me nearly every time we met, 'I don't say but what she isn't good-natured and fond of her children, and I've never heard her husband make no complaint, but Sunday clo'es or workaday, it's all the same to her, and always was. And if you was to go into the house this very minute, you'd find both them boys in the front room, and Lizabuth, as like as not, with the baby in her arms lookin' on at 'em! Why, you won't find a break in my parlour carpet, and we bought it when we was first married. Oh yes, she's good-hearted enough, but juss look at our Mary—there's a contrast!' To try and induce her to look at Mary with seeing eyes was my main object in going to the house. Lizabuth, in spite of a somewhat premature marriage, was a handsome and vigorous young woman, while the clean and tidy and economical Mary was fading away from anaemia before any real strain had been thrown on her constitution.

The general ascription to the poor of the virtue of humility is a literary fiction of ancient date and extraordinary vitality. Perhaps the rich were formerly more arrogant and less inclined to apologise for their existence than they are now, but the poor can never have been humble, and they certainly are not humble now. Their education has never yet been sufficiently liberal to enable them to attain that crowning grace; it is the painful joy of those who look before and after.' My patients and their
friends generally managed to be extremely well satisfied with themselves, even when quite uncensorious persons saw little in their conduct that called for admiration. If the account could not be made balance in any other way, they boldly took credit for the sins that they *might* have committed; while when they were really up to, or beyond, any standard by which they could reasonably be tried, they constantly reminded one of La Rochefoucauld’s well-known saying, ‘Our pride is often increased by what we retrench from our other faults.’ The only approach to timidity and fear to demand even acknowledged rights was among families which had supplied the nation with many soldiers and sailors. Their strongest conviction appeared to be that there ‘was such a lot of ’em,’ and that they were therefore unimportant.

A very large number of earnest workers among the poor are apt to be misled by what Adam Smith calls ‘the dislike to pride and vanity’ which ‘generally disposes us to rank the persons whom we accuse of these vices rather below than above the common level. In this judgment, however, I think we are most frequently in the wrong, and that both the proud and the vain man are often (perhaps for the most part) a good deal above it; though not near so much as either the one really thinks himself, or as the other wishes you to think him. . . . Pride is frequently attended with many respectable virtues . . . vanity with many amiable ones.’

Only those intimately acquainted with the homes of the poorest of the stationary poor can realise the virtues that are implied by the existence of rows of decently kept ‘mean streets.’ Religious philanthro-
pists of the always popular repairs-while-you-wait school boldly utter the opinion that the condition of the inhabitants of drunken, thriftless slums is less 'heartbreaking,' less 'unspiritual,' less 'godless' than what they choose to call the 'dead level' of the streets which make no such dramatic claim upon their services. Less prejudiced persons would discern that the dwellers on the dead level have in reality reached a point of civilisation from which it is comparatively easy to make a fresh and real advance, for self-control and the essentials of morality are already there. Nature knows nothing of short-cuts, and has always stamped with approval the man whose motto is, 'Let us stay a little that we may come to an end the sooner.'

All workers among the poor should take to heart this story of a little boy who, at the close of a three weeks' drought last summer, was given a watering-can with which he busied himself until bedtime. When he awoke he heard a steady drip, drip, and in much displeasure asked his nurse, 'Why is it raining?' 'Because God sends it.' 'But why?' 'Because He thought we needed it.' 'H'm'm—then He can't have seen me with my watering-can yesterday!'

As Phillips Brooks says in one of his sermons, 'Besides all the pain of seeing how men disown the care of their fellows, there is another pain which is often yet more painful, as we see how men who do attempt to help their brethren, help them all wrong, with such ignorant and clumsy hands that they do them more harm than good. Meddlesomeness, arrogance, foolish indulgence, wanton severity, wooden insistence upon a way of goodness which God never meant for the man whom you are trying to make
good, opposition to good impulses because they happen to be in other lines than yours, fussiness, suspicion, jealousy, all of these evils come in, and others with them, to make sometimes worse than worthless the most sincere desire of some good man to help and guide his neighbour. Blind leading the blind everywhere! What, it seems to me, all these good people need is this: the larger view of the life they are anxious for. . . . The time must come, if you are ever really going to be of deepest use to that man when, out of something which he says or does, these two truths come to you about him, that he is larger in his nature, more mysterious than you can grasp, and that he is the son of God, led by his Father, over and above your care.'

Both in town and country there seems to be a general belief that the poor are dearer to their Maker than the rich. The poor are necessarily 'saved,' but the rich can only be saved by works. As the clergy are all among the rich, this relieves their flocks from any troublesome sense of gratitude. Doctors are not as rich as clergymen, probably because their work is of a more concrete nature and often performed at hours extremely inconvenient to themselves. Nevertheless, and especially in the north of England, my patients appeared to imagine that doctors lived by the mere fact of being employed. 'It's two days since Jones was here. I shall send for Thompson!' a convalescent patient would protest angrily. 'Is Dr. Jones's last year's account settled yet?' I would sometimes ask, but the question was considered quite irrelevant.

At the same time, few outsiders have any idea what large doctors' bills are often paid by persons of
extremely moderate incomes. I knew one case where a man, whose wages were equal to about thirty-two shillings a week, but were subject to no uncertainty save that of his own health and conduct, both of which were excellent, paid thirty pounds in one year for medical attendance for his little daughter. The following year, as her condition had rather deteriorated than improved, and as her mother was worn out with nursing her, she went to hospital for three months. She returned slightly better in health and very much more manageable, as for the first time in her life she had been brought under gentle but steady discipline. Both parents highly appreciated the results, and took up their burden again with fresh cheerfulness. I wish it were more often possible for hospitals to find room for incurable cases for a few weeks every year. It would keep up the standard of home nursing, give the relatives a much-needed rest, and enable the house to have that 'thorough clean' which it so seldom gets where there is a chronic invalid and no paid service.

In one town there was a doctor whom most of my patients, with the usual perversity of human nature, all longed to employ, in spite of his brusquely expressed determination to have nothing to do with them. He had loud, cheery manners and used very strong language, but his qualifications were the lowest possible, and his practical experience had been almost entirely confined to men in the prime of life. What a limitation this is may be guessed from the fact that a naval Inspector-General of Hospitals, hearing that a little boy who lived a few doors from him had measles, asked as a favour to be allowed to visit the child, because he had never seen a case!
To try and frighten away this class of patient he used to send in bills to £12 cottagers that would hardly have been paid without protest by £60 householders, and it was no empty threat. He waited a very brief time, and then put the bills into the hands of a collector. Close at hand there was an excellent doctor, one of the gentlest and best of men, who was willing, and even anxious, to attend the families likely to be worst served, persons just above those entitled to the free services of the workhouse nominee, and who made his charges strictly in proportion to their means, but his skill and devotion rarely excited either faith, enthusiasm, or gratitude.

We nursed one woman five times through rheumatic fever, and she never expressed, nor do I think she felt, the smallest gratitude to the Association for its services. I afterwards came across a man who had suffered from rheumatic fever nineteen times. I tried to find out if he was grateful to any one for the immeasurable amount of care that he must have received, but found that he was, as the poor express it, 'so ate up with pride' at the distinguished nature and degree of his sufferings that there was small room left for any other feeling—and perhaps least of all for self-pity.

The proverb that 'no news is good news' is peculiarly true with regard to the poor. Their belief in the superior dignity and importance of bad news is deeply rooted—it is only the exceptional persons who hasten to recount their blessings. One day a poor woman, a Londoner by birth, whom I had known for many years, came with tears and outcry to tell me that her husband's employer 'had been and give him notice.' It was not an immediately distressing
case, as the man had been in steady work for fifteen years, there were no children, his age was only thirty-two, he bore an excellent character, there was no real scarcity of employment in the district, and he had been given four weeks' notice. The only disquieting point was, that unlike the majority of weekly wage-earners, they had taken a house on a five years' lease, the rent was rather high, and the landlord needy and impatient. I assured the wife that I would do everything in my power to help her husband find another situation, and carried out my promise. After exerting myself and boring my acquaintances for about three weeks, I learnt accidentally that the man's employer had withdrawn the notice (given in a fit of irritation caused by an exceptionally stupid and costly blunder) two days after it was given. This trait of character is constantly displayed even in cases where the relation of a loss is no conceivable gain, and the acknowledgment of a piece of good fortune could result in no deprivation. I read newspaper reports of parents who 'hasten' to remove their children's names from free dinner lists, etc., the very moment the father obtains employment. I can only say that I have never witnessed such conduct, and that its ceremoniousness is even more remarkable than its scrupulous honesty. Ordinary parents would simply tell their children to 'stop away' when they found that they could give them a better dinner at home, but unless strict and close inquiries were made they would not openly admit the change in their fortunes.

Ill-health is such a distinction that servants have unbounded respect for the employers in whose families there is much sickness. One parlour-maid, whose middle-aged master and mistress enjoyed average
health and more than average good spirits and courage, always made the utmost of any small ailments that fell to their share. Her favourite replies to any inquiries after them were, 'He's no ony waur to-day, and 'She's no a' thegither laid by.' Further questioning would lead her to own, unwillingly, that her master had gone to town after an eight-o'clock breakfast, and that her mistress was out paying calls. All this was a sign of sincere attachment, and a desire to exalt their importance, and a general wish to do as she would be done by.

Eating is too closely associated with drudgery to take a high rank among the pleasures of the poor. If gourmards and gourmets had to be their own cooks and kitchen-maids and waiters they would soon be reformed indifferently, or even altogether. Neither are well-ordered nor well-served meals commonly seen. One has to go astonishingly high in the social scale before one finds tables laid with the least pretence at convenience, much less beauty. In many well-paid artisans' homes even the Sunday dinner is not served in any definite order, but is eaten as it is cooked. It is quite a chance whether vegetables or pudding come first, but meat is generally held over for the second or third course, as the poor rarely eat bread at any meal worthy to be called dinner, and both men and children need to be 'fed up rough' before they are let loose on expensive viands. Water is never placed on the table; the child who wants it goes to the tap with a cup. Except when the house-mother has been long enough in service to effect a permanent change in her ideals and habits, the table arrangements always remind me of an untidy, chronic patient who told me, in response to unspoken criticism,
'Me dear, I gets up, y' see, an' I puts on me cloes as I misses 'em.' In addition to all other negligences and discomforts, the meal is either laid on a very small table, or on a hastily cleared corner of a larger one. Poverty has no necessary connection with the matter. In one of the poorest districts I ever entered, I saw three decently laid dinner-tables within twenty yards of one another.

There is a great deal of voluntary asceticism among the aged poor; to eat much is synonymous with greed and wastefulness. On the eighty-eighth birth-day of one of his parish patients, a doctor sent her a savoury dish to tempt her appetite. The pleasure that she derived from it was to invite two younger women to tea with her, and then to tell every one how they had eaten the whole of it, 'except the merest bite that I took out of civility to them, and just for to be able to tell the doctor that I 'd tasted it. I was never one for my meals, never.'

By some of the more thoughtful women cheap food is not regarded as an unalloyed blessing. One of them said to me recently, 'There 's an awful lot of drinking on Sat'days, and this cheap food 's at the bottom of it. You can drink pretty well all you want to, and yet the children needn't go akshally hungry. A fourpenny foreigner (a rabbit) and three pennorth of vegetables 'll make you as good a dinner as you want. And drink isn't the only thing. Over at the buildin's where my sister lives, it makes me and mother mad to see the airs the women give theirselves, tripping out with their falls and their kid gloves and their umbrellars, and buyin' a few pieces at the cheapy-cheapy's, and their children nipped into tight little clothes and everything too short and too small
for 'em, and showin' as much knee as if they was all Hyde Park! Mother goes off in a shawl to do her shopping, but she goes to a decent butcher, and however small the joint may be, she has it cut off for her. We like our food clean, not pieces that have been lying in a heap for every one to handle.'

Faith in change of air is often as ignorantly held as faith in drugs, even by persons whose station in life is decidedly above that of my patients. Some highly respectable people who made great sacrifices, or rather, a long series of small ones, in order to be able to take their children to the seaside every summer, lamented and wondered that they benefited so little by their stay, and were often ailing for several weeks after their return. It was impossible to ask many questions, but in the course of time I learnt that while at home the family occupied three good bedrooms, used their kitchen until after dinner and their sitting-room for the rest of the day, that they had a small, well-kept garden back and front, that the children were sent to the park for three hours every day, and that they were surrounded by neighbours of the same class and habits. While at the seaside, during the hottest part of the year, father, mother, and three children of five, seven, and eleven shared one bedroom in a terrace house touching the pavement in front and backed by neglected stone yards, and they took their meals in the landlady's kitchen, where all the people of the house slept during the season.

In order to go away 'for change' every year, one family never allowed themselves a fire in their sitting-room. They were paying nearly £40 rent and taxes, and received good value for the money, but for quite seven months in the year mother, children, and servant-
girl spent nearly the whole of the day in a small kitchen. The little girls were in one way far worse off than their poorer neighbours, for they were sent into the next street ‘to be taught by ladies’ at ninepence a week and a pound a year extra for music lessons. Eighteen children were confined for five and a half hours a day in a room measuring 14' × 16' × 9'. In a sixpenny school I have counted fifteen little children between three and nine years of age in a room 12' × 10' × 8'6".

Sound and certain sleep is not as general a blessing among poor and needy as poets (and moralists) feign. Considering that good sleep depends upon a variety of physical conditions, and not solely upon muscular fatigue, how could one reasonably expect that all toilers should sleep in Elysium? And when sound sleep does follow physical exhaustion, those blessed by it are in much the same position as the Irish maidservant who protested, ‘Sure, an’ I don’t be getting any good out of me night’s rest. D’reckly me head’s on the pillow I ’m asleep, and the very moment I wake it’s time to get up!’ People like not only to sleep, but to know that they are asleep. I have often been told the story of a retired boatswain, who after a life passed in rising at 4.30 A.M., spent part of his comfortable pension in hiring a man to wake him every morning at that hour, so that he might enjoy the luxury of swearing, flatly refusing to turn out, and falling asleep again.

One of the unacknowledged reasons for the unpopularity of domestic service is that although the average amount of sleep allowed (generally nine in the country and eight and a half in the town) exceeds what girls would take in their own homes, there is
no night when they may sleep as early or as late as they choose. I recollect a German school where the occasional petition of the English pupils, wearied by rising at 5.30, was, 'To-morrow may we ausschlafen?' They seldom found it possible to sleep later than seven, and they could not extort the coveted permission more than once a fortnight, but it was an immeasurable relief from being awaked by the sound of the bell.

The poor enjoy a pleasure which is almost entirely a lost art among the upper classes, that of sitting down when their work is finished and doing absolutely nothing, free from all thought but drowsy reverie. The educated man's work is never finished; when his professional duties are over for the day there are always books that 'must' be read, letters that he 'ought' to write, social, philanthropic, or political matters to which it is a 'duty' to attend. Even if he sits down in the garden and watches his children at play, the result is sure to be strenuous exertion. The children do not know the rules of the game, or—worse still—do not keep them, and he must intervene; or the newspaper that he is 'just glancing over' reminds him of some forgotten obligation that must be attended to at once; or he discovers 'with half an eye' that the gardener is at least a fortnight behindhand with his work, and cannot rest until he has convinced his wife of the fact.

The ordinary wage-earning father derives more unalloyed satisfaction from the society of his children in their early days than is ever enjoyed by the more apprehensive and far-seeing man of the professional classes. So long as the former can provide them with sufficient food and clothing and 'keep a home together'
—and the enormous majority can readily do this—he is distressed by no anxiety with regard to them. He does not seem, as one may say, to take them seriously, and is far less troubled about their moral training than the most easy-going of mothers. For example, uneducated women rarely succeed in treating their children with impartiality, but at the same time they recognise that any exhibition of childish jealousy is a merited reproach to themselves, and they never wantonly foster this evil quality. But I have often seen children between three and eight, more especially boys, shaken from head to foot by despairing and rageful sobs caused by grief at their father’s too exclusive attention to another child, while the man has looked on, flattered and amused by the storm of feeling he has raised, and even doing his best to aggravate it. These same fathers will hastily check a mother who administers a well-earned slap to a healthy child of two or three, and will pay ninepence a week per head to have their younger children taught in a stuffy back parlour so that they may escape the offchance of being ‘hit with the pointer,’ and will boil over with indignation if their troublesome ten- or twelve-year-old son returns home half exultantly displaying a bruise, visible—when held in the right light—to sympathetic eyes. They neither realise their own wanton cruelty and their waste and perversion of the power given them by a child’s natural love of approbation, nor grasp that they themselves are the cause of nearly all the punishments received at school.

Unfailing delight is found in conversation. ‘I’m only talking for talking’s sake’ an old man announced calmly, after putting a railway porter to the trouble
of replying to several questions, the answers to which he knew perfectly well. Among the uneducated a jest never fades into nothingness; if it really suits the mental palate, it is a joy for ever. Reminiscence, good and bad, forms a wholly disproportionate part of conversation. The poorest classes rarely look forward, except to the next world. It is with no straining of words that one counts religion among the pleasures of the poor, and where it is not a pleasure it is very rarely a pain. Sunday-schools are eagerly attended, and—with their accompaniments—must be considered one of the great joys of childhood, while even if there is little or no immediate result from the teaching received, it often bears abundant fruit later in life.

The poor as a whole strike me as strangely insensible to the sight of 'Our Fathers' Works,' and not in the least anxious either to add to them or to do anything towards keeping them in repair for the general good. Roads, railways, bridges, churches, great buildings of every description are taken as a matter of course, and excite no interest. A woman whose attention had been drawn to the Thames Tunnel considered the matter for a few moments and then said: 'I suppose it was made afore the river was there.' They are also indifferent to all past history. An exceptionally intelligent woman, whose schooldays and historical studies alike had ended at the age of twelve, said to me, à propos of nothing in particular: 'I've often set and thought of Napoleon crossing the Alps, and wondered how he could ha' done it!' She is getting on for thirty-six, and it has not yet occurred to her to wonder why he crossed them. If, as the poet says, 'we live by admiration, hope, and love,' the poor miss a third part of their heritage.
With regard to the practice of the arts, the absence of any high standard makes self-satisfaction and family pride easy, and, indeed, almost unavoidable. When I am invited to hear sons and daughters sing, or play any musical instrument, the description of their ability given to me beforehand never affords the slightest clue as to whether it will be a really creditable performance, or a mere childish stumbling over the simplest conceivable arrangement of some popular air. Few among the working-classes have any idea that music requires serious study, and still fewer that constant practice is needed. A girl of about twenty-four applied to an acquaintance of mine for a situation as parlour-maid. She was satisfactory in appearance and character, but towards the end of the interview she announced that she played the violin. 'If it were any other instrument,' said the lady deprecatingly, 'the sound is so penetrating. You could not practise without being heard all over the house.' The girl looked at her in perfectly innocent astonishment. 'I'm so talented, m'm, I don't have to practise.'

'Splendid isolation' is the chief joy of the aristocratic poor; to boast how few people you are on friendly terms with is as common a foible as it is in other circles to boast of the extent of your visiting list. *Le snobisme* has been defined by a Frenchman as insufficient reverence for one's own ideals, and extravagant reverence for those of the class above, but there are persons who only escape *le snobisme* by being as blind to the existence of other people's ideals as they are deficient in ideals of their own. 'Not to have no dealins with 'em,' always strikes me as a pitifully narrow conception of life, even when
accompanied by temperance, fortitude, and polished door handles.

This extremely exclusive aristocracy often reminds me of a bitter-tempered and h-less old officer who, some thirty years ago, used periodically to convulse the few shipmates with whom he had remained on speaking terms by telling them emphatically, 'My superiors won't know me, and I won't know my inferiors, and hequals I 'ave none.' Needless to say, the last division of his speech was usually quoted as if it were the whole.

House-pride is more especially a woman's pleasure, and varies in degree even among the most respectable persons, while the differences which can and do exist between the standards of comfort and decency of next-door neighbours, with the same income and the same necessary outgoings, have to be seen in order to be believed. I know two modern cottages adjoining one another, each provided with a well-lighted entry. Mrs. A's little hall has no floor-covering but dirt, no furnishing of any kind whatever; the paper is stripped from the walls as high as the children can reach, and the plaster shines with grease. Mrs. B's hall is guarded by scraper and door-mat, and the greater part of the floor is covered by a warm rug; the window has full-length muslin curtains; there is a table with an art-serge cloth, and a vase of cut flowers or a growing plant always stands on it; there is an extemporised umbrella-stand, and five or six coat and hat pegs fixed into a neatly cut and painted strip of deal, and the wall-paper is intact. Involuntarily one looks for a card-tray. A and B hold similar positions and draw equivalent wages, and except for differences in character there is no reason why A's
entry should not resemble B’s, or why B’s should not be as A’s. I have never been admitted further in either house, but ‘them as knows’ tell me that they are ‘all of a piece.’ Dwellings are rarely better inside than out, while I have such sad familiarity with the background, often screened by the whitened sepulchre of spotless curtains and pampered pelargoniums, that I always wait for further evidence. Nevertheless, even the most ardent apostles of cleanliness shrink from the sound of Mrs. B’s voice, while I am never tired of watching Mrs. A’s little sons clinging to her untidy skirts when she crosses the road to fetch a pail of water, unable to endure the desolate eternity of two minutes’ separation.

Expensive furniture is desired by men, women, and even children, partly as incontrovertible evidence of character and position, partly to satisfy an untrained æstheticism. Comfort has nothing to do with the matter, and use is still less considered. In a home often visited by sickness, and where in earlier days hunger had more than once shown its terrible face, there was a brass fender in the locked parlour. I naturally thought it was a recent purchase, but the second daughter, a girl of twenty-four, told me that it dated from her childhood, and described with glee how ‘all five of us went along o’ mother when she choose it,’ and how, although forbidden to enter the shop lest they should ‘put her about,’ they had managed to get a view of the proceedings through door and window. Even in the comparatively prosperous days when I made their acquaintance, it would have been easy to pick out fifty things that they needed more urgently than that fender.

Perhaps the real reason why pictures precede other
superfluities is because even the most 'keerless' and revolutionary person cannot suggest any method of using them. I almost invariably find that it is the frame and the extent of glass that gives a picture its value; not only is artistic worth entirely unrecognised, but the subject rarely excites the slightest interest. In a town where, by some chance of trade, the subjects were mainly historical, two especial favourites being Charles I. bidding farewell to his children, and Lady Russell parting with her husband, I never succeeded in drawing any explanation of them from their owners, nor did they feel any interest in receiving one from me; their attention always wandered to a spot on the glass, or a newly-perceived chip on the frame, doubtless due to 'that there boy.'

Not only are the working-classes convinced that things of value are not intended to be used, but they cannot believe that anything in use is of value. A lady who for thirty years had made daily use of a silver cream-jug that had formerly belonged to her grandmother, replaced it, when she had more than two or three guests, by an electro-plated one which matched the larger teapot needed on these occasions. She told me that she had never had a servant who did not handle the electro-plate jug with reverence and despise the silver, one young woman quite innocently referring to the latter as 'the tin mug.' She also told me, and I think her experience is that of most mistresses, that servants always seemed more conscious of having given reasonable cause for vexation if they broke the cheapest, most worthless 'ornymint' than if they had smashed the most essential parts of the dinner service.

By looking into the china shops in poor neighbour-
hoods one gains rather an exaggerated idea of the crudity of the general taste. As a rule, although my patients loved what they called 'a bit of colour,' very little of it was sufficient, all the rest must be 'something quiet.' For ornaments their highest ideal is white and gold; they love to dress their children 'all in white,' and the usually unattained desire for their own clothing is 'good black.' No cheap materials have this indescribable quality, and a lady's black dresses and coats, however old, are much more welcome gifts than coloured ones.

A friend, choosing a small present for a former servant, turned to me in perplexity: 'What shall I do? If I buy her what she really likes it will make me shudder; if I buy what I like it will be a disappointment to her. That is what she would choose,' pointing to a blue-green plaque, over which were crawling tomato-coloured crabs in high relief. Other people's difficulties never seem serious, and I said hastily, 'It would be a crime to buy that plaque for anything but a target. Buy what you like, and she will like it for your sake, and perhaps later on for its own.' But she could never either find her own solutions or accept any one else's, and she is still outside that shop pondering over this aesthetic and moral problem.

The poor derive an immense amount of pleasure from the exercise of such charity as they can afford, for they are entirely without the undercurrent of doubt and distrust of which the educated are conscious even in their most enthusiastic moments. They are often saved by their minute acquaintance with the circumstances of those whom they assist, but sometimes they are as entirely ignorant of these as if they were
millionaires' wives, and they are as thoughtless of consequences as generous children. In our attempts at helping the sick poor, we all, and especially nurses, should beware that we are neither depriving the neighbours of a little paid work that they could do without neglecting their homes, nor of the only form of charity within their means. I remember observing the exquisite cleanliness of a brick-floor cottage inhabited by an old and feeble couple, and the wife told me that a young girl, a milliner's apprentice, in no way related to them, and only known to me by her slight, graceful figure and ultra-fashionable dress, 'do often come in of an evening for an hour and set to and do the cleanin' fer something beautiful.'

To do the entire washing of a sick woman's family, and to continue to do it for weeks at a stretch, is a common form of neighbourly charity. In one case, a cottage woman with several young children was convalescent after a three months' illness, but there was reason to fear that she would remain in poor health for at least a year. The eldest daughter, a girl of sixteen, in service two miles away, said to me: 'Mrs. Black has been doing all the washing, but mother says she can't have that any more, because when mother sends up the soap and soda she won't even use it, and of course there's the firing beside. So mother has put the children into flannelette. That don't want boiling, and it's steam that does her most harm. And they're to wear blue pinnies, except on Sundays. They'll make a fine fuss, I 'xpect, but it will save mother a lot of work.' Mrs. Black was a woman quite sixty-five years of age, living with her husband on a small pension and their savings. By the way, many a mistress who is vexed
by her servants' state of fatigue after their 'evening out,' and attributes it to 'gallivanting,' would be astounded if she knew how often they have spent it at the wash-tub, the mangle, or the ironing-board.

It may well be counted among the pleasures of the poor that they seldom see two sides of a question, or, at any rate, not at the same moment; the process, unlike the enviable sentences passed on so many unspeakable scoundrels, is consecutive, not concurrent. If two or more sides are simultaneously observed, it is generally by elderly and leisurable people. A retired tradesman, planning out a garden, refused to plant any apple-trees, because 'who knows if the good of them would come in my time?' The old agricultural labourer, receiving his orders, asked pertinently, 'Who did plant appuls fer we?'

The ethical problems of life are comparatively simple to the majority of the poor. Duty is always clear; they either do it or leave it undone, and are absolutely certain which course they have followed. Nothing is known of 'the months, the years of painful indistinctness.' Self-reproach with regard to recognised mistakes is rare; they 'did their best,' and to examine themselves as to whether they were in a position to have displayed sounder judgment does not occur to them. If the children of parents who have 'done their duty by 'em' come to grief, neither father nor mother asks such questions as, 'Ought I to have let him take that situation? Was I right to let him keep it when I found out the character of his fellow-worker?'

I was speaking to a patient one day of the many sad cases one sees where parents appear to have done all in their power for their children, and yet have
conspicuously failed. She surprised me by saying hesitatingly, 'I sometimes think it's because they don't pray for them enough.' It is almost the only sign I have ever observed of seeking for other guidance than traditional views of 'duty,' applied without reference to individual character.

Most working-class parents err on the side of excessive indulgence, thinly veiled from outsiders by shrill scolding and empty threats. They vainly imagine that unbroken indulgence will secure the lasting affection of their children, for this is far more effectually done by the parental self-denial which does not shrink from practising steady restraint and occasional severity. The elderly man or woman who can boast that as children they were sent out to play with strict injunctions from their mother 'not to speak to no one,' and that if they ran off to school leaving their share of the housework unfinished, 'Mother didn't never say nothing, but when you got home to dinner there was only just half as much put out for you as for the others,' and that as young people their father 'gave them the strap' if they did not return home before dark, have exactly the same filial pride and gratitude that is felt by persons in another station of life whose parents sacrificed themselves to obtain every possible educational advantage for their children, and then compelled them to exert themselves.
III

PUT YOURSELF IN HIS PLACE

Through the lips of one of his favourite characters Charles Reade told us nearly forty years ago, 'This great "transmigratory art," although it comes of itself only to a few superior minds, can be taught to vast numbers ... were it to be taught as generally as reading and writing, that teaching alone would quadruple the intellect of mankind, and go far to double its virtue.' Unfortunately, he did not even attempt to explain how this teaching could be given, and the art is in as backward a state as ever it was. Like the characters in his novel, we acquire it, if at all, after long and bitter experience. Experience is an excellent teacher, but by the time we have paid her fees there is small margin left of time or strength or zeal.

If this incapacity were only common among selfish and self-seeking men and women it would be of comparatively little consequence, but it is the kind-hearted, benevolent, unworldly people who are most conspicuously deficient in mental detachment; for, after all, it would be impossible for schemers and scoundrels to succeed unless they were more adept at understanding the state of their neighbours' minds than are many of the most charitable persons. Con-
scious only of the excellence of their intentions and
of others' almost palpable needs, the latter do not
even supply their favourite text, 'Do unto others
as you would that they should do unto you,' with the
two most necessary glosses, 'If you were in their
place,' and 'as you ought to wish that others should
do unto you.'

In working among the poor, inability to 'put your-
self in his place' may sweep away in an hour an in-
fluence which it has taken years to establish. I knew
an excellent clergyman who worked with absolute
self-devotion in one of the most crowded districts
in London. He had considerable power over young
men, and a large number of them were regular com-
 municants at the early celebration on the first Sunday
in the month. One summer morning there was a
tropical downpour of rain, and very few of the men
appeared at church. As soon as the vicar had an
opportunity, he bitterly and publicly reproached them,
declaring that they would not have stayed away from
their daily work on such a paltry pretext, and that an
earthly master would have dismissed them summarily
if they had, and so forth. He not only offended them
deeply, but their mothers and sisters and wives, all
thinking that he 'had ought to have understood'
that it was impossible to come to church in their
working clothes, while their cheap, shoddy, Sunday
suits would have shrunk over wrists and ankles if
exposed to such drenching rain; and they also con-
sidered it a lack of fair play to attack them from
the pulpit. Soon after that his health broke down
and he had to leave the parish, where he is now, but
solely on that account, remembered with tolerant
affection.
Every one at the present day wishes to rush in to instruct the working-class wife in the art of cooking, without stopping to consider either what she has to do, or the conditions under which it must be done. For instance, they order her to abandon immediately the wasteful and unappetising habit of boiling puddings in a cloth; there is no economic salvation to be found except in steamed puddings. Several facts are ignored; not the least important being that our mothers' cooks always boiled their puddings, and our fathers were not only perfectly satisfied with them, but in many cases would have resented the idea of any change in the system. I remember as a small child seeing a gentleman-farmer send away his plate on which there was a portion of a steamed pudding, with the impatient exclamation, 'If I can't have it boiled, I don't want it!' Secondly, that neither the average working-man nor his wife nor his children have as yet acquired any dislike to puddings white and sodden outside, grey and gluey inside. Thirdly, in order to cure the smokiness of their chimneys, most cottagers are obliged to lengthen the air-shaft by nailing a sheet of tin under the mantelshelf, and this leaves barely enough space for a large saucepan or kettle, while the addition of a steamer is impossible. Finally, steaming takes twice as long as boiling, and therefore needs more fuel and more attention. On these very sufficient grounds I always contented myself with suggesting that the pudding should be put into an enamelled basin, and the basin stood in a saucepan of boiling water. This is almost as quick a method as boiling in a cloth, and every housewife recognises what a much larger pudding can be produced with the same amount of flour.
Would-be reformers of the culinary art among the poor coolly take it for granted that the women who for countless generations have kept their men-kind more or less contented, have brought up to maturity a large proportion of their offspring, and have done this on sums ranging from ten shillings a week upwards, are, nevertheless, absolutely ignorant of their business. Such mind as they have is a tabula rasa, upon which the benevolent must hasten to scrawl recipes lest they perish—an assumption that can lead to nothing but exasperation. The first thing that the instructors need to grasp is, how admirable are the results of a poor woman's cooking when compared with her means, and how much that is of value can be learnt from nearly every decent workman's wife.

If the teaching given is to be practical, nearly all the recipes must have originated in the kitchens of the lower middle-class and of thrifty artisans, and never proceed from the brain of a hasty theoriser, who thinks that habits and palates can be reorganised in a day, and ignores the axiom, 'The stomach is the great analyser.' Individual preferences cannot be left out of account. I knew a country practitioner who, whenever his wife had a ham in cut, would beg her to send a few slices to Mary Jones or William Gibbs. She was burdened with ideas of hygienic diet, and would sometimes protest, 'My dear, you had better let me send a nice little piece of mutton. What nourishment can a sick person find in ham?' ‘Possibly none at all,’ was his reply; ‘I am thinking of the bread, and so on, that they will eat with it if they are tempted by something that they “fancy.”’

All schemes of diet must bear in mind the facts that as long as the husband's teeth last he will have
what is solid and even tough, and that he is almost as suspicious of strange food as a half-tamed animal; that the children will have plenty of sugar; that the wife will have tea; that hot food (except in liquid form) cannot be prepared more than once a day; that for obvious reasons large quantities of bread will always be eaten; that cold bacon is constantly preferred to cold mutton, and dried fish to fresh; that all insipid food is disliked; that no poor person is a vegetarian except under compulsion; that a town-dweller's power to digest peas, beans, and lentils is limited; that the batterie de cuisine will consist of a big saucepan and a small one, a frying-pan, a fork, and a couple of pie-dishes, and that among these implements the frying-pan and the fork are an easy first and second. Probably a cheap and simple mincing-machine would be the greatest blessing that could be introduced into the poor man's kitchen, for the extravagant expenditure on sausages and potted and tinned meat is quite as much connected with difficulties of mastication as with the love of 'something tasty.' Bread would be used much less wastefully if it were eaten two or three days old, but this would imply the use of bread-pan. No one could reasonably expect the poor, with their commonly neglected and defective teeth, to eat a loaf that had been kept for this period on a kitchen shelf.

Sometimes a mere realisation of measurements will enable one 'to put oneself in his place.' I heard some acquaintances discussing the question as to whether it would be possible for two young servants to sleep in a certain room. I offered to measure it for them, and they were startled to learn that it would have been perfectly legal to permit six children to
sleep in it, while, as a matter of fact, there were whole families in their own village who had less accommodation. An ingenious young friend of mine, trying to describe a certain bedroom occupied by several persons, told me, 'If I stood on tiptoe, I could nearly touch the ceiling with my tongue!' I looked faintly surprised at this method of calculation, and said, 'I suppose you mean that the room was about six feet high?' 'Well,' she replied defiantly, 'I believe in realism if it's properly applied. There's nothing like it for bringing things home to unimaginative people.'

Even a very few steps in the social ladder seem to make a great gap between two different classes, and it sometimes surprises me to find that it is the poor who can best supply the mental bridge by which the chasm must be crossed. Those who feel themselves above the poverty line often have a sincere pity for the burdens of the rich. I once heard *per ardua ad astra* translated as 'the stars have a hard time of it,' and that fairly represents the attitude of £12 householders towards the persons who, socialists inform them, are 'keeping them in slavery.' The *genre* of 'comp'ny manners' is perhaps what excites most commiseration. 'Father's never so happy as when he's in his best clothes,' I was told of one excellent workman, but this entirely exceptional taste was accounted for by the fact that 'he has a first cousin who's a bannister.' I failed to recognise the trade until, more than a year after, the father's purchase of a pair of patent leather boots made her return to the subject. 'And if ever he's made a judge, it's the hope of father's life that he'll let him sit up by his side, just for once. But not if it's a big case;
father has too feelin’ a heart for that. He couldn’t really enjoy himself if it was penal servitude.’

Of her mother she told me: ‘Now, mother, there’s ways in which you might say she ’d be hard to beat, but there’s no style about her, nothin’ classy. Never was, nor yet will be! She can clean out the flues without getting a single black on her face, and she ’ll do you a day’s washin’ with a dry apern, and not slap so much as a spoonful of water on the floor; but dress her as you may, and take her where you like, she ’s all for ease and comfort. If she ’s hot she ’ll take off her gloves and undo her bonnet strings wherever she may be, and although father ’s give her a pair o’ buttoned kid boots every other birthday s’long ’s I can remember, you ’ll never see her in ’em accept at church. And a fall she never will wear. Father used to try takin’ her about a bit, but she didn’t never seem to fit in to it. The on’y ent’tainment I can remember as she really enjoyed was when he took her to a confirmation and the Bishop o’ London—not the one that ’s there now, she don’t make no account of him—told ’em about his patched trowsis and all, and then he shook hands with mother ’n father, and pretty near the whole church full. She ’s often spoke o’ that. Father couldn’t never keep her quite up to what he thought proper. When we was little, if she caught sight of us in the street doin’ anything we hadn’t oughter, out she ’d fly and fetch us a smack on the head then and there. When father ’d say, “Wait till they come indoors. It do look so bad!” she ’d say, “I might forget it was owin’ to ’em.” And then he ’d say, “If you can’t remember what they ’ve done wrong, how can you ’xspect them to?” And she ’d say, “They ’ll remember fast enough s’long ’s
I have the smackin' of 'em!" But it was mos'ly talk with her. When father hauled us into the back kitchen and tuned us up with a strap, there was more need to holler! She always said that when your hand wasn't enough to hurt a child, it was time to give up beatin'.

There is hardly any social problem which would not to some extent be simplified by the light of 'Put Yourself in His Place,' and it would even be of use in weighing and estimating the relative value of all evidence bearing on these questions. Not long ago an article that I wrote on the subject of Home Industries was refused by an editor on the ground that 'your views are in no way supported by facts which members of our staff have paid two thousand visits to ascertain.' Two thousand sounds an imposing number, but not when one considers (a) that they were single visits, and therefore the history of the family could not be known; (b) paid by persons who had little acquaintance with the daily lives of the poor; (c) and paid with a special object in view; (d) that they were all paid within a very short space of time, and therefore the history of the district could not have been known; (e) that the visits were all paid with reference to one particular branch of home industry, and in a neighbourhood where it had very recently been established; (f) that the information consisted of replies to set questions given by uneducated women who were naturally rejoicing over the possibility of adding to their incomes, and who did not yet realise in the smallest degree what they would never realise fully—the price that they were paying; (g) that these investigators did not enter houses where no home industries were carried on, and had therefore no standard of comparison.
Even with regard to mere number of visits, district nurses need not fear comparison with such a record as this, for not many of them pay as few as two thousand in the course of a year. The essential difference in their opportunities of observation is, that while they seldom visit any house less than five or six times, they would visit others fifty times or more. The average would probably be about twenty, and each visit would last from half an hour to two hours. Moreover, their visits (with intervals of discontinuance which would only sharpen their observation) may well last over eight or ten years, and they are assisted in their judgment by the opinions of friends and neighbours and relatives to the fourth and fifth degree. Therefore, what they know, they have every opportunity of knowing thoroughly, and if we once acknowledge that human nature is alike in its broad outlines we shall be more impressed by the results of a close examination of a moderate number of fairly representative cases than by a 'supercilious knowledge' of many thousands. Home industries of any but a highly skilled type are only possible because the woman sets so little value on herself. She tells you that she finds more profit on 6s. earned at home than on 12s. earned at the factory, not realising that she saves most of the difference by having scantier food and worse clothing than could possibly be made to meet the demands of factory life.

If we were more versed in the 'transmigratory art,' we should be less puzzled by the preference shown for town life by the great majority of the working-classes. In a former book I gave the length of the hours, and the constant attention needed by live-
stock, as being among the reasons for the dislike of country labour. A critic, evidently accustomed to town life varied by an autumn acquaintance with large farms, denied that the hours are long except in the height of summer, or that animals needed constant attention 'except in the lambing season.' I did not mean that any agricultural labourers worked steadily for fourteen or fifteen hours a day, because few human beings could bear such a strain, and it certainly could not be done on a countryman's diet; and it would have been more exact to say that animals require 'frequent' rather than 'constant' attention. On the other hand, the critic seemed unaware that cows have to be milked all the year round, and that as their needs are not greatly affected by daylight, the usual hour for beginning the work is between five and five-thirty A.M., and that the 'milk' train must be caught twice a day seven days a week. He did not even seem to know that if farm horses are to begin work at seven, they must be fed and attended to at six, and that it is equally necessary to feed them at nine on the previous evening.

The larger the farm, the more possible it is to organise the work. The smaller the farm, the more varied and ceaseless the claims upon the workers. On one thousand and two thousand acre farms (chiefly corn and turnips) I have often seen the whole of the Sunday work managed by two or three men in two or three hours. On small 'all sorts' farms Sunday labour begins at the usual hour and lasts until eleven, begins again before five, lasts until seven, is not really completed until nine or nine-thirty, and affects nearly the whole of the persons in regular employment. The ordinary town labourer works five and a half
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days, and in many cases one-eighth of the day is cut off on Mondays; the ordinary country labourer works from six and a quarter to six and a half days. As to the 'numerous holidays,' the only ones generally observed are Christmas Day, Good Friday, either Easter Monday or Whit-Monday, and one local fair; and a country holiday never means complete cessation from work, for there is much that cannot possibly be intermitted. If holidays were ever frequent or general in the country, how can one account for the firmly-rooted custom of 'planting gardens' on Good Friday, whether that day occurs in March, and the season is backward, or in the middle of April, and the season is forward? A Kentish labourer told me recently, 'Where I worked as a lad, more than fifty years ago, Good Friday was the only holiday you had all the year, and you didn't get that unless you went to church in the morning. There were two churches, and the squire went to one and the bailiff to the other, and they'd stand up and count the men, and them as wasn't there had their day's wages stopped.'

In hospital life the general inability of the public to put themselves in the position of either patients or nurses was constantly thrust upon me. Hamper after hamper of wild flowers would arrive. No doubt the hot and weary gatherers comforted themselves with visions of rows of patients each ecstatically clasping a bunch. As a matter of fact, nine-tenths of the flowers were so dead that they never entered the wards at all, and those that did were regarded with chilly indifference by persons accustomed to 'garden flowers' or none. I shall never forget the stony stare of a broken-legged cabman to whom, at
the urgent request of a cathedral dignitary, I presented a bunch of wild flowers and a message of condolence. The cost of a hamper and the railway fare would have provided two or three growing plants that would have lasted a fortnight, even in the heavy atmosphere of a hospital, and would have given real pleasure. As a ward-sister I have been burdened on several occasions with presents of wreaths that had already hung eight days in a church! The books supplied for the patients were nearly all too heavy in weight, the specially made clothes were ludicrously out of proportion, the old clothes (otherwise so valuable because they had fitted one human being and therefore might fit another) had generally reached their last days, and the cast linen, however carefully the night nurses mended it, would scarcely bear going to the laundry three times—and in district work much of it had to go there once before it could even be handled!

In the houses of the very poor I have been struck by the facts that nearly all the Bibles, prayer-books, and hymn-books are the gifts of Sunday-school and Bible-class teachers, and that the print is so small that they are unsuited to any but the youngest and strongest eyes. Realising that no others are likely to be bought or given in later life, I went to a lady who was about to buy Bibles as prizes for Sunday-school scholars and begged her to try and get larger print. She objected: ‘Oh, it would cost so much more. We have not the money.’ I said, ‘Surely it is better to buy a New Testament, or the Gospels, or even a hymn-book in print that they will be able to read all their lives.’ ‘They would not like it. We have always given the entire Bible.’ ‘Then can
you not sacrifice the binding? I have seen perfectly plain Bibles with reasonably good print at a very low price?' 'The children would be disappointed.' I saw the books afterwards: even young girls could not read them with ease.

If we remembered Reade's hero, we should not be surprised that the working-classes are 'slow at the uptake' of the newest social teaching, for we must in justice recall that it differs greatly from that which we formerly tried to impress upon them. Middle-aged people can well recollect the days when the shadow of Malthus still rested on the land, and the death-rate among children was viewed with a sense of relief not always decently veiled. I have often heard respectable working-women, possessed of a troop of healthy children, reproached for their excessive number, and have known the more spirited among them driven to the bitter retort, 'Poor men is different from rich ones, by what I can hear. My husband's children is all in one house.' We have done our best to destroy the faith of the poor in the educational value of manual training, and now we are laboriously trying to restore it. The poor-law guardians of to-day are endeavouring to colonise the country with town paupers; those of the day before yesterday emigrated them in troops to the towns to save them from starvation and crime.

In considering the problems connected with old age, 'put yourself in his place' is a necessary guide and check. For example, all suggestions with regard to old age pensions appear to take it for granted either that the pensioners are able to safeguard their own interests, or that they have children to take care of them. Owing to early marriage, high death-
rates, migration, emigration, and a certain proportion of childless unions, a large number of men and women above the age of seventy are entirely without the protection of near relatives; while every added year reduces their physical strength and their will-power, and is more likely to bring incapacitating illness in its train. Old people in possession of a pension are as much in need of protective guardianship as the many children in a similar position. I remember a very superior old widow who, becoming unable to attend upon herself, even with the assistance of a daily visit from a district nurse, took in a young woman to share her large, comfortably-furnished room and wait on her. At first all went well, but within six months the young woman introduced a husband. Soon after that the door was firmly closed in the nurse’s face, and whatever her suspicions were she had no right of entrance. If it had been a poor-law case she could, of course, have applied to the relieving officer, often the best friend of old people in difficulties, and if dissatisfied he could have insisted on her removal to the workhouse infirmary. The pension arose from an independent source, and apparently there were no legal means of protecting the helpless old woman. If old age pensions became the general rule, it would be necessary to have the same right of entry and right of search as is granted under the acts for the prevention of cruelty to children.

Under present conditions, childless and partially disabled old people in possession of a pittance generally lodge in the houses of persons who have known them for a long time, and who think it an act of natural piety to wait upon them in their desolate old age, or, at any rate, are wise enough to prefer a small rent paid
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regularly by a quiet and harmless tenant to a larger but uncertain one paid by 'fluid labour.' When the number of these pensioners and the amount of their income both increase, they will be competed for by a very different class of landlady.

A fallacy that we constantly yield to when criticising the home methods of the working-classes lies in the belief that because we could do every single piece of work better than they can, therefore we should do the whole better, and continue to do it. We need to remember, among other things, a phrase that a cook was in the habit of repeating to me every morning, 'Every day comes so often. Now, if it was once a week——' Another insufficient allowance that we make for a poor woman in her own home is, that from lack of space and lack of utensils she is often forced to do her work piecemeal, and this means that her day consists of what sailors call 'broken time.' For example, it would be a great save of time and trouble and hot water if she could wash up the crockery not more than twice a day, but for want of a sufficient amount, and also for want of any place where it could be piled up and left unwashed without giving an appearance of intolerable squalor she is obliged to wash up after each meal. In the ordinary composite household found among the poor, there are rarely fewer than five meals a day to be prepared, and there may easily be eight. Most women make heroic efforts not to wash clothes more than once a week, but if there are several children in the house it is difficult to resist the temptation. Cleanliness ranks before order. In some ways the poor have a greater horror of mere external dirt than the rich. Often in speaking of another person's occupation, perhaps far more
tedious and ill-paid than their own, they will sigh enviously, 'He never has no need to make hisself dirty.' Personal ablutions are always looked on as a painful necessity entirely resulting from one's surroundings; not to need washing is an infallible proof of superiority of position or conduct. 'Is my neck dirty?' I heard one schoolchild ask another, pulling down her ragged lace tucker to display it more fully. 'No, not a bit,' replied the other, with polite avoidance of the thing that is. 'Well,' exultingly, 'it hasn't been washed since Tuesday, and this is Friday.'

Some acquaintances of mine were trying to find lodgings in a seaport town, and had almost decided to engage three rather conveniently situated rooms, when the landlady said suspiciously, 'I hope you 're not like some as come after 'em last week—nasty, foxy things—said they wanted a bath every day! I soon showed 'em out!'

In nearly all cases the children of the poor are much more frequently washed than superficial observers believe, and their mothers are only too well justified in ascribing their griminess to their surroundings. I once spent a month in a middle-sized town in the north of England. It chanced that I never passed through the workmen's quarter earlier than midday, and although there was nothing noticeable about the schoolboys and schoolgirls, I thought the children of doorstep-age were the dirtiest I had ever seen outside Edinburgh. If I had been asked how often they and their pinafores were washed, I should have thought that once a fortnight was a most charitable estimate. A year later I stayed there again for a week, and discovered that between eight
and nine A.M. these children were as well washed as any in the kingdom of a corresponding class.

In the same town I was struck by the fact that at one o’clock literally hundreds of children sallied out with cans and jugs. No really ardent teetotaller would have been able to resist the belief that they were bound for the public-house, ‘hence these rags,’ or any other unsatisfactory point in the appearance of any one of them. On making inquiries, however, I discovered that the water laid on in the houses was under suspicion of containing typhoid germs, and these ‘hapless victims of the drink curse’ were in reality the children of careful parents sent to fill their jugs at certain standpipes which guaranteed an untainted supply for drinking and cooking.

Considering the difficulties under which it must be done, one could hardly expect the act of washing to be regarded as a pleasure. It would often be better for our understanding of social matters if the poor turned on us as the cannibal did on the missionary: ‘All very well for you to talk! If we had cows and sheep and pigs and goats, do you suppose we should take the trouble to eat one another?’

Unfortunately a very large proportion of those who endeavour to put themselves in the place of their working-class neighbours do it in an entirely one-sided manner; their sole wish appears to be to discover the things that their poorer brethren cannot be expected to do, and to ignore those that it would be perfectly reasonable to demand of them. At the present day it would be difficult to call to mind a single duty of life which some large body of well-meaning persons has not vehemently protested that the poor cannot be expected to perform. It does not
do to lose sight of the fact that the more that a man is expected to do for himself, the larger his income tends to become, and the less, the smaller. The benevolent doubtless intend that whatever is given to the poor shall be an addition to their wages. As a matter of fact, in the long-run people can only hold what they earn, not what is given to them, and they are lucky if the addition does not turn into a subtraction. Streets have been pointed out to me where rents had been raised because a soup-kitchen was opened in the near neighbourhood every winter. It was a repulsive-looking mixture, and with lumps of what must have been waste bread floating in it, and it could only be obtained for about five months out of the twelve, and as the recipients had to keep up some pretence of being out of work, all the inhabitants did not receive it, and all did not even wish to do so, but all had to pay the additional rent. When calculating the income of a man with a guinea a week, it is fair to remember that his children’s education, a certain amount of medical attendance, and the services of ministers of all denominations are provided freely. It is also fair to remember that if he did not receive all these things without payment his wages would be higher. By the time he becomes more intelligent and more alive to his own interests, he will probably prefer receiving and disbursing almost the whole of his wages.

Charges of quarrelsome and gossiping are constantly brought against the poor, and there is plenty of foundation for them; but if we fully realised the conditions of their daily lives, we should speak more of their tolerance and placability. Monotony almost inevitably produces irritability and explosiveness, and this is the case among far more liberally educated
persons than the rank and file of working men and women. I remember an old officer telling me that, while lying month after month off the west coast of Africa on the watch for slavers, he had heard, and taken part in, many heated disputes as to whether the tail of the celebrated lion on Northumberland House turned east or west. And a much younger man who had lived under the same conditions said to me, 'Gossip isn't a matter of sex, it's a matter of idleness. Women can't manufacture pettier gossip than you will hear in a messroom. I defy them to!' Those who remember the frequency of street fights in broad daylight five-and-thirty or even five-and-twenty years ago, cannot deny that quarrelsomeness has lessened with shorter hours of work and more varied occupations and amusements. In one large town I recollect an excitable little girl returning from her afternoon walk with the complaint, 'Mamma, we have not seen a single fight to-day!' Nurses, who began district work ten or fifteen years before I did, found many elderly men with long-standing ulcers, attributed to the effect of kicks received in fighting, but I have never met with such an experience, nor have I ever been called on to dress any injury inflicted by a woman on a woman. Verbal quarrels may fairly be accounted among the pleasures of the poor. The retorts seem clumsy and time-worn, but they afford as exquisite a satisfaction on all sides as a large proportion of the educated derive from persiflage and repartee. Even those who never take an active part in quarrels enjoy them, and feel dull if obliged by circumstances to move into a quieter neighbourhood. I wasted a great deal of pity on a gentle young woman, the members of whose family and their respective
'in-laws' were perpetually quarrelling, and rejoiced for her sake when her husband found work in a small country town, where she lived surrounded by retired shopkeepers and farmers, who were willing to be on friendly, if slightly condescending, terms with her. I find that the only really happy times of the year for her are when parties of relatives and 'in-laws' come by four-day excursions to see her, and when she returns their visits. Circumstances are not everything: 'He'll shape his old course in a country new.' That may not be exactly what Shakespeare meant, but if misquotations are a sign of general respect for the author, misapplications must be an even greater proof. The happiest misquotation that I have heard recently was made by a very fiery woman with marked approval, 'Well may the poet say, endurance vile!' A clergyman gave me an amusing instance of inability to 'put yourself in his place.' A very wealthy woman asked him if he gave a tenth of his income to the poor. He replied that he did, it was a rule of life handed on to him by his father, and he had carried it out ever since he had been in a position to do so. She seemed astonished, and considered the matter for a few moments. Then her face cleared. 'Of course it's all very well for people of moderate means, but in my case a tenth would be so much.' Still, it is almost better that people should be totally without desire to practise 'the great transmigratory art' than that they should be like a former acquaintance, who, observing a sick goldfish in a bowl, took it out, wrapped it up carefully and laid it on the mantelpiece, where, she said, 'it would be much more comfortable.' Half an hour later she was surprised to find that it was dead. Poor woman, she treated
her sons and daughters in much the same way, and was even more surprised than hurt to find that they were always happier when out of her presence. Her days were filled with good intentions and generous acts, but there was as little visible profit in her life as in that of the most intensely selfish woman I ever met. This person, belonging by birth to the struggling professional classes, had been adopted by wealthy connections and had married a rich man considerably her senior. She had never done an hour's work in her life, and I was trying to enlist her sympathy for a woman of about her own age condemned to toil for seventeen hours a day. She was so little affected by the figures, that I thought she must be among those who 'cannot for their life take two from twenty and leave eighteen,' and expanded the text by adding 'That leaves seven hours for sleep and every other purpose.' 'But that is quite enough,' she protested. 'I never sleep more than four hours; that leaves three to do as she likes. No one can expect more leisure than that.' How much time she really passed in sleep I cannot say, but although in perfect health, she never spent less than fourteen hours out of the twenty-four in her bedroom, and invariably breakfasted there.

'Half the world does not know how the other half lives' is a favourite phrase, but so over-moderate that it amounts in effect to an exaggeration. Very few people have the faintest idea of the conditions under which persons outside their own class are allowed to move and live and have their being; and this ignorance constantly shows itself in the judgments passed on them and the aspirations entertained for them. If, for example, we had a clear conception
of the lives necessarily led by working farmers’ wives, we certainly should not advocate the provision of small holdings on easy terms as an infallible check on the deterioration of the national health. In a district where small farming was long established, and on the whole not unprosperous, I found it difficult to account fully for the fact that the farmers’ children would not bear comparison with the labourers’ in number, beauty, or physique, and if I observed a fine boy or girl among them I was almost invariably told that it was ‘my cousin from London.’ I attributed this inferiority where one would naturally have expected a marked superiority to the comparatively late age at which the parents’ marriage took place, the self-indulgent life led by many of the men, and the excessive physical work of the women before and after marriage. No doubt these are important factors, but I had overlooked another, which was accidentally brought to my notice by a monthly nurse who was employed exclusively by farmers’ wives. In reply to a question on the subject she said, ‘Yes, they generally nurse their children for a fortnight or so, but as soon as they go downstairs they give it up. With the dairy to see to, and so on, they can’t very well manage it. And even if they could, working about as they do, I don’t know but what I wouldn’t rather bring the children up by hand. The poor little things get so upset, and then there’s no peace with them, night or day.’

The labourer’s wife is believed to have earned her living when she has looked after her tiny house and her children, and laid out her husband’s wages to the best of her ability, and as she does not go in for fancy-work of any description, she has several hours of
complete leisure every day, and even in the summer she seldom rises before six-thirty or retires later than nine. The youngest child spends most of its time in her arms, and those arms, even if unskilful, are strong, tender, and warm. If at any time she feels unable to do her work, she 'lets it bide,' unreproved by a too exacting standard of life; or her equally leisured neighbours come to her assistance, and in due time she repays them with similar service.

The farmer's wife only takes charge of her baby at night; as it is independent of her, its days are passed in the care of a girl too young and feeble and reckless to be allowed to carry it. The child, therefore, lies hour after hour in a perambulator in damp, shady corners, or in cutting winds, or in the glaring sun, with its dim eyes blinking and streaming, or wherever may seem an interesting spot to its small and selfish guardian. To prevent the race from dying out, there are sometimes grandmothers and aunts with ideas of Infants' Rights, which they are permitted to grant at their own cost. How can the farmer's wife help it? She is a wage-earner; worse still, she practises a home industry; worst of all, she cannot throw it aside even when her children are ill.

The following is a fair sample, in some ways an over-favourable one, of the life of a working farmer's wife: Mrs. A's husband rents a dairy farm of thirty acres, and hires in addition one or two large fields which he devotes to root crops. Besides cows and the necessary horses, they keep pigs, geese, ducks, and fowls. The number of animals far exceeds that formerly reared on the farm, and as very little has been spent on building, or even on repairs, the agglomeration of sheds and houses and lean-to's is hope-
lessly inconvenient and unhealthy. The dwelling-house covers a great deal of ground, and, nevertheless, is built on four floors (more than three is unusual, but underground kitchens are by no means unknown in the country) and dates from the days when farmhouse servants were plentiful and nominally cheap, and all the domestic arrangements are incredibly comfortless. For example, the front door (the one always used) opens into an entry which is very low and has only one small window, but which measures 25' × 40'. This is used as a storeroom and a shelter for hen-coops with their young broods; by crossing it one reaches a pantry, and by walking through the pantry one arrives in the back kitchen. There is no direct connection between the back kitchen, where all the washing up must be done, and the front kitchen, which is the living room; fifteen steps must be taken, and two sharp turns. The stairs lead out of the front kitchen, and are as steep and broken as in a cottage. The dairy and the pump are as far from one another as possible, and the larder receives the maximum of sunshine. It is really difficult to believe that this is all the result of chance; it looks like calculated malice.

The household consists of Mr. and Mrs. A, Mrs. A’s father, the former tenant of the farm, a son of working age, two girls of thirteen and eleven, and a pretty, delicate little fellow of six, who could easily pass for a widow’s child, reared in a London slum on home industries subsidised by out-relief. As the school is only half a mile away, the mother was sorely tempted to send him there ‘to be out of the way, like,’ as soon as he was three years old, but he disliked the prospect, and wept and wailed with such per-
sistency that he entirely evaded attendance until he was well past five. At that age he began adding to his natural delicacy by catching every possible complaint in steady succession; convalescence spent in his mother's wake, and generally with wet boots, was slow and uncertain, and he filled the intervals with toothache, earache, sore throat, etc.

In consideration of 'minding' her little brother for as many hours as her school duties permitted, and not slapping him more than she could help, the elder girl had always been excused from the work commonly done by children in her position. The boy had now no further need of her, but the mother discovered, to her dismay, that it was impossible to 'break in' an obstinate girl of thirteen without making the house a scene of strife and tears. The younger girl was 'more biddable,' but she was small and childish even for her age, and the mother could scarcely set her to work while her sister was idle, and with many qualms of conscience and some natural annoyance, she allowed them to spend all their free time and holidays in play. If a customer chanced to come to the house, not one of the children would leave off their game to call their mother, and if the poor woman told one of them to gather the eggs, or help catch a chicken, their sulkiness made her blush.

Mrs. A always rose before six, and frequently at four, was seldom in bed before half-past ten, and was at work the whole time, cooking, cleaning, feeding and tending animals, milking, scalding and scrubbing dairy utensils, plucking and preparing fowls for market. Once a month a woman came to do the washing, but had not a moment's time left for mangling, starching, or ironing. Mrs. A's position in
life demanded that she should possess a handsome dress, bonnet, and mantle, just as some irresistible power compelled her to affix the remnants of her grandmother's tea and dinner services to the parlour walls; but the fine clothes were worn twice a year, and the china was thick with dust. Her usual costume, Sundays and week-days, from morning till night, was a cloth cap, a torn, cotton blouse, a short, frayed skirt, and a sacking apron, while a heavy pair of men's boots weighed down and disfigured her small feet. 'My husband says they 're boats, not boots,' she remarked one day. 'But there! with all the wet and mess and dirt I have to be about in, what else would keep me dry? Men must have something to laugh at!'

Only two labourers are regularly employed on the farm, and they are supposed to 'live out,' but there is scarcely a day when, on one pretext or another, they do not have a meal in the kitchen. During hay-harvest, and at other busy seasons, four meals a day have to be provided for six men.

During the time I knew most of Mrs. A (our acquaintance is of long standing) her father, a man of over seventy, was taken ill and was confined to his room for several months. He was in possession of a sufficient income, and his daughter was really attached to him, but I found that he had to endure more than all the discomforts of cottage life; and when I made suggestions for overcoming them, no one ever had leisure to carry them out. In a labourer's cottage, or a workman's flat, the contrivances that I asked for would have been 'put together' on the first Saturday afternoon, if not sooner.

Nevertheless, the old man's health steadily im-
proved, and I learnt, to my amazement, that when downstairs he was in the habit of drinking half a gallon of whisky every week and an unmeasured amount of cider. I am certain that the habit was a comparatively recent one, and arose mainly from disgust at the coarse, ill-cooked food, unsuited to a man of his age, and from the extreme dulness of his life. There was never an hour when his daughter could sit down and talk, or read him the local newspaper, and never an hour when the grandchildren would.

I was especially anxious that before he went out of doors he should be supplied with a flannel belt, and I gave Mrs. A the pattern. It was a thing that could have been made, even by hand, in a single evening. Day after day went by, and it did not appear. At last, finding that the poor old fellow was much hurt at this neglect, and not seeing why he should be left to suffer simply because he was well-off, I ordered him an extremely gaudy one from the Army and Navy Stores for a Christmas present, and allowed him to suppose that it was a thing which no one ‘out of the trade’ could possibly make. As another example of the comfortless state in which the whole family lived, and the way in which labour was squandered, there was no scraper at the entry, and no doormat until I gave them one—hoping to raise the standard of their requirements.

When the elder girl leaves school she will go and stay with relatives in London, small shopkeepers. Can it be wondered at if, remembering her mother’s life of toil, and contrasting it with her aunt’s, she is inspired with the ambition to marry a clerk with two pounds a week and live in Laurel Avenue, Peckham?
The favourable circumstances in her mother's life are that she has, up to her present age of forty, retained good health, that only one of the four children is delicate, and that her husband, although unamiable, is strictly sober and wastes none of their hard earnings in card-playing. Owing to the peculiar temptations of the life, its vexations, losses, and physical hardships, and owing also to the lack of general education, and the dulness and mental depression arising from the consequent narrowness of outlook, temperance has not advanced among farmers at the same rate as among their social equals, or even their inferiors. To return perfectly sober from market is the exception with a large proportion of men, and if their horses did not know the rule of the road accidents would be still more frequent than they are. If a farmer is very late in returning, there is more damaging gossip about his horse's character than his own.

When ability to 'put yourself in his place' stamps out the injurious prejudice that education unfits people for a country life, the 'rural exodus' may at last receive a check.

There is a widespread conviction that country lads are necessarily strong, bold, hardy, impervious to book-learning, but keenly observant, while town-bred lads are their inferiors in everything but arithmetical ability and cunning. Nevertheless, a man who had had very large experience of the Naval training-service told me recently, 'All our best boys come from London and the large towns. They are better developed and have much more "go" and courage. They nearly always know how to swim before they come to us, while the country lads are much more of molly-coddles and seem as if they
had never been wet all over at once in their lives. They give very little trouble except from their timidity, but even when they have got over it to some extent, it is dreadfully easy for people to put upon them. Just to give you an example: I came across a lad still drawing the pay of a first-class boy. I happened to remember his exact age, and asked, "What does this mean, Smith? You ought to have been drawing a man's pay for the last eight months." "The commander said not until November, sir." "But you know as well as I do that your birthday is in January. Why in the name of common sense didn't you tell him so?" The idea that it was merely a mistake on the commander's part, and that it would be perfectly safe to make a respectful protest, never entered his mind. As to book-work? Oh, they are much of a muchness. There are ways of making classes of boys appear to know any amount, but take them one at a time and you find that the first difficulty trips them up. I find them all very deficient in knowledge of words, and a great deal of the teaching that they get passes over their heads—they could understand well enough if they were taught the language, or if it were translated.

We should remember Johnson's dictum that we have to be 'moralists all our lives,' and not allow ourselves to be too much abashed by the arbitrary use of the word practical. Arithmetic and mathematics and elementary science may be more practical than literature, but there is nothing practical in teaching a country lad cube root and elementary algebra and Euclid and leaving him so ignorant of his own language that he is not able to extract any information from even the simplest text-book on gardening or agri-
culture. Confronted with an unknown book he is quite as helpless as the average high-school pupil when asked to translate what in examination-jargon is called 'unseen Latin.' As a child I remember possessing a French grammar, the author of which (probably a German!) prided himself on its practical nature, and especially upon the richness of its nautical idioms. One of the sentences the pupil was called on to translate was, 'Belay your jaw, you swab, if you want to keep the number of your mess.' I asked an old sailor if he had found French idioms necessary at sea, and he relieved my mind by assuring me, 'Only one sentence which we roared through a speaking trumpet—and it has gone out of fashion since the price of chronometers went down.' I decided that on the whole the well-worn inquiries as to the whereabouts of Malvina's lace shawl and the game-bag of Marcel had more right to claim the vaunted practicality. And to return more closely to our subject, it is quite as practical to teach water-colour painting to the son of a casual labourer as it is to allow him to wear himself out before he is sixteen by carrying weights which would be too heavy for an ordinary man of five-and-twenty.

Paucity and incorrectness of language are widespread among the farming classes. Their children, if possible, speak more ungrammatically than the cottagers, and often with an ugly admixture of cockney slang. I recently overheard a dispute between a boy of twelve in his Sunday dress of Eton jacket and collar and a girl of six, with scarlet frock, embroidered sunbonnet, bare legs, and sandalled feet. The boy had told her that the farmhouse servant, over whose sudden disappearance she was grieving,
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had been dismissed for stealing. 'She don't have been sneakin' none of our things, she don't!' cried the girl indignantly a dozen times in succession, and just as often the boy replied in an irritating sing-song, 'Yes, she have!' Young and middle-aged members of this class frequently make use in conversation of such expressions as 'us didn't know' and 'us did used,' even when they have received enough formal education to enable them to write a letter almost free from grammatical errors. The women rarely read anything at all, the men read such brief portions of the local newspaper as may happen to interest them, and their speech rapidly slips down to the level of that used by the people they employ.

Superficially the matter may not seem to be of much consequence, but extent of vocabulary and the precision with which it is employed are real tests of mental ability. The working farmer has much physical fatigue, little leisure, small intercourse with his equals, and practically none with his superiors. The only thing which could sustain a man's general mental powers in such a position would be a more liberal education than he ever receives.

The virtue and joy of industry and the vice and misery of idleness are not proclaimed at the present day with sufficient zeal and insistence. This may be a natural reaction from child slavery and hours of adult labour limited by nothing but the powers of human endurance; but that does not prove it to be a wholly beneficial change. The gospel of joy is everywhere expounded and extolled, but it would be well to keep in mind Ruskin's unusually sane demand that nothing should be accounted true education which did not make its pupils 'capable of honesty and
capable of delight.' The old educational ideals needed to be expanded, not reversed.

In noting the general lack of voluntary industry in the homes of the poor, it must be remembered that industry, like cleanliness, costs money, that it often demands an immediate outlay and brings in no measurable profit. Naturally industrious women are often led to take up some form of ill-paid home-work because they long for more occupation, and consider themselves unable to afford materials to be used for the comfort or beautifying of their surroundings. Town dwellers, living in small and conveniently arranged quarters, and with no garden, nor even the opportunities of recreation provided by a doorstep, are especially tempted to drag down wages by working for what they acknowledge to be 'almost nothing.' I can never forget the dreary boredom of a young married woman I saw in the street about half-past ten one summer morning. 'I'm only just up,' she said to a friend hurrying to do her shopping. 'What's the use? There's nothing to do. Only two rooms, and Tom out all day from six o'clock.'

If she had been capable of making her own and part of her husband's clothes, and of reading fluently, she could not have found life so empty. An enormous number of people well under fifty years of age are still quite unable to read, to use their own phrase, 'so as to find any pleasure in it.' To test the difference of ease and speed I have often asked children of nine or ten belonging to the professional classes, 'How many pages of that book have you read this afternoon?' and the reply is generally from twenty to a hundred pages. Comparatively few people educated at the Council Schools, and double or treble
the age of these children, would read as many as ten pages at a single sitting. A girl of seven was staying with me, and I lent her a book which she read in two days, although not allowed to spend as much time over it as she wished. I did not consider her at all a clever child, but lending the book afterwards to working-class girls between fifteen and eighteen I found that, although they were keenly interested in it, the perusal took them from a fortnight to a month. I know one child of six, daughter of an agricultural labourer, who can read the local newspaper to her father, who cannot read three words, but she owed more to the teaching of an elder sister than to the instruction she received at school.

Although fully recognising the difficulties of teaching the children of almost entirely illiterate parents, and of teaching them in very large classes, I think rate-payers ought to demand that the average child of twelve should be able to read any book suited to its age with ease and pleasure. If this feat can only be accomplished, under present conditions, by giving up one or more less valuable accomplishments, the sacrifice should be made. All the knowledge that a child has acquired at school will rapidly pass away from its mind unless held together by the ability to read understandingly.

One of the great drawbacks of so much oral teaching is that the pupils are, and often remain, entirely dependent upon others for any information that they need. I had many probationers who had received most of their education in Council Schools, and I found that more than half of them were quite incapable of making any use of even the simplest text-books. It is difficult for those who have handled books from
their earliest years, and in whom memory, oftener than not, visualises as a printed page, to grasp how utterly useless books were to these fairly intelligent young women.

If more practical persons prepared courses of study, perhaps less unreasonable things would be demanded of the children of the poor. I was once suddenly called on to take the first class in a Sunday-school where there were about a hundred pupils. The usual teacher, the vicar's wife, sent me the book she was supposed to use, and said that the girls had reached as far as the Litany in their study of the Church Service. I looked at the indicated portion of the text-book: its suitability for labourers' daughters may be gauged by one direction given: 'The children should be encouraged to draw up their own analyses of the Litany, provided that these are founded upon some rational principle.' Every tenth word of the Litany was utterly meaningless to the girls, although they ranged from fourteen to twenty-three years of age, and had attended Sunday-school from their earliest childhood, and there was scarcely a single phrase which was entirely intelligible to any one of them. Those who demand the impossible will always be badly served.

The two most important parts of school education are that the rank and file of the pupils should learn to read any ordinary book with ease, and to write a business letter containing a clear statement of some, at least, of the essential facts of the case which they are trying to represent. Advertise for a lad or a young man between twenty and twenty-four, and say that applicants are to write giving full particulars, and this is a fair specimen of the replies you will
receive: "Dear Sir, I seen your advertisement' [generally written in full and correctly spelt] 'I think your place woud suit me yours truely H. Jones.' If the mother makes the application, the letter will be worse written and spelt, but will probably mention her son's age and the fact that he 'can be spoke for.' I have seen dozens of such letters written by lads of from fifteen upwards, and although in many instances I have afterwards learnt that they had been in the sixth or seventh standard at school, and were the children and grandchildren of persons who could read and write, not one of them contained such details as previous experience and wages required. Letters written by girls of a corresponding age generally contain a little more information, but are very far from being documents which would enable a mistress to arrive at any conclusion as to whether it is worth while to arrange an interview.

I knew one Council School where letter-writing was regularly taught, but I could only gather from pupils past and present that 'we can't abear it,' or, 'we did used to hate it.' The caprices shown by children as to the subjects they 'hate' must chiefly be due to the way in which they are taught. I have rarely heard a Council School child express any dislike to arithmetic, and a large proportion name it as their favourite study; reading is generally detested by all the younger ones, while older girls have often told me, 'I didn't mind anything but geography. It was in the afternoons, and I used to beg and pray mother to keep me at home them days.' Others profess the same aversion for history. All that I have questioned 'hated ' grammar, and certainly none of them understood anything about it, either in theory or practice.
Writing is a favourite occupation, and drawing is liked by the majority. The position held by sewing depends a great deal upon the mother, and the amount of interest she shows in the girls' progress. Cooking would be a highly popular subject if the mother took a less obstructive attitude. I heard of one enthusiastic teacher who could only obtain permission for her pupils to practise what they had learnt by promising to pay for all the materials they spoilt.

Laziness is not one of those natural failings which will drop away as a writer expressed it, 'like the stalk leaves of a plant when it reaches maturity.' It is natural for children to be interested in many things, and it is therefore possible to train them to willing and persistent effort. It is a mischievous error to regard indolence in childhood and youth too lightly, for later on it is almost irremediable. Stronger motives for exertion will of course arise, but in many cases they will meet with scant recognition from those in whom no habit of industry has been formed. Instead of being a harmless weakness or a tiresome failing, laziness is one of the most direct roads to every form of cowardice, dishonesty, and cruelty. In its extremest forms it is more frequently found among men than women, but it is common enough among the latter to be the origin of much domestic misery.

Judges and bishops and field-marshal and great men generally have much to answer for. They cannot be trusted to make a speech without boasting that they were extremely idle in their boyhood, and of the poor opinion held of them by their parents and guardians. Instead of imitating the strenuous and apparently successful efforts made by these severe elders to overcome this serious defect in character,
their hearers draw the somewhat wild conclusion that the idleness of Tom, Dick, and Harry is a matter that can safely be left to ‘come all right in the end.’

It is a curious fact that I have always found an exceptional amount of courage, industry, and mental alertness among persons in all stages of consumption. No one can be foolish enough to imagine that the disease produced these admirable qualities, while it is more than possible that their unregulated exercise may have produced special susceptibility to infection. When the ravages of consumption have been stayed by generally diffused knowledge of some of the simplest laws of health, these much needed elements of character may be present in larger proportions even among the lowest grades of labour.

The ineffectiveness of industry and ambition, when unaccompanied by the wisdom that is ‘profitable to direct,’ was constantly impressed on me by the history of a family that I had under observation for over twenty years. During the whole of that time (and up to the present day, ten years later) the father was non-resident caretaker of a building which was in use three times a week. His duties, which included the charge of quarter of an acre of grass and shrubs, occupied two whole days (one of which was Sunday), one evening, and part of one morning. For this he received £1 a week, and varying sums in small fees. His wife was employed to keep the building clean, work which took from eight to ten hours a week, and for which she received £12 a year. As she was permitted, in case of necessity, to hand her duties over temporarily to any respectable and capable woman, and as the institution was within a child’s cry of her
home, there was perhaps as little objection to be made to the arrangement as to any form of paid labour for married women. The work was neither excessive in amount, nor underpaid, while the sum received was not large enough to cause any relaxation of the husband's efforts.

The man was capable of what was locally called 'hedge gardening,' and there was a steady demand for his services: taking all the year through, he could safely count upon three days' employment every week at 4s. or 4s. 6d. per day. This raised the family earnings to nearly £2 a week. I do not know what rent they paid, but for the last seventeen years of the time they occupied a detached house, which had formerly been a middle-class residence, but had been allowed to fall into exceedingly bad repair. The great advantage that it possessed was that it had a garden large enough to produce a liberal supply of vegetables.

If the man and his wife could have been content to live on this income they could have brought up their family in decency and comfort, and made provision for sickness and old age, but they were not satisfied with such an unadventurous course. The wife was a tall and graceful woman, and had been a parlour-maid, and as men waiters were not much liked in the neighbourhood she was frequently employed at small dinner-parties, receiving 10s. a night. Nor was this all; she occasionally accepted the work of monthly nursing and took in dressmaking. The husband's ambition was to be an employer of labour, and he constantly lost money by engaging men at a certain guinea a week and then trying to hire them out for an uncertain 4s. 6d. a day. These unlucky
speculations alternated with three still more disastrous attempts at shopkeeping, each of which plunged him into difficulties from which it took several years of hardship and self-denial to extricate himself.

There was a long, straggling family, sufficiently well-fed and sent regularly to school, but dirty, untidy, and otherwise neglected. The mother’s manners were charming, her speech singularly refined, and she never lost the habit of personal neatness, but the children had in no way benefited by these good qualities. The three eldest were very delicate, the three next died, and then, with even more than the usual incomprehensibility of nature, the family ended with a sudden cluster of five vigorous, noisy, ugly little girls. Neither son nor daughter was apprenticed to any trade, nor placed under any useful discipline whatever. They achieved a premature semi-independence and a Jack-of-all-trades’ knowledge by assisting their parents’ varied undertakings.

On making recent inquiries, I received an unchanged report of the family; always working hard, always in difficulties, just opened another shop. The man is over sixty, the wife not much younger, but not a penny has been laid by for their old age. Is it fair to the community that men should do exactly as they choose with an income sufficient to provide for their entire life, and then obtain a pension, on their own terms, as a reward for ignorance and obstinacy? When this man applies for a pension I am tolerably certain (being well acquainted with his fluency in asking for advances on work that was unconscionably deferred) that he will represent himself as a man who has brought up eleven children on a pound a week.
Another instance of the profitless toil of unreasoning industry. A man with 28s. a week and working in a town where rent was low, had a wife and one child, a girl of ten. The husband was almost a teetotaller, the wife entirely so, and they had excellent health. The man spent his Saturday afternoons and all his evenings in paid work of any kind that he could get, from netting curtains to frying fish, and his wife took in fine ironing, and worked as a superior charwoman or temporary servant. One might reasonably have imagined that they were what their neighbours called ‘well to the fore,’ but an unlooked-for occurrence proved that they were living in an entirely hand-to-mouth fashion. Owing to an act of folly, a sudden call was made upon the man for £2, 10s., and he was obliged to borrow the whole of it from his master, who stopped half-a-crown a week out of his wages until it was paid. If he had not consented to make this advance, a steady, industrious man in the prime of life must either have gone to prison, or sold ten pounds’ worth of furniture, or have applied to a moneylender.

Another man held a situation precisely similar as to hours, pay, and work. He had ten children, chiefly girls, with fifteen years between the eldest and youngest. The wife had good health, but was too entirely occupied with her family to dream of earning any money. The children attended a sectarian school, and fees varying from a penny to fourpence per week were paid for all of them, but an economy was made by teaching them to read at home. The father was of rather delicate physique, and the weekly fifty-six hours of compulsory labour was as much as he could manage, and his leisure was divided between an
ungrateful garden, the frequently renewed 'youngest but one,' and his chapel.

The family were never in pecuniary difficulties of any kind, and except for a few presents, which were more of a friendly than a charitable nature, they never received any assistance. When I last heard of them, the three sons were all doing well, five of the daughters were satisfactorily married, and a sixth was engaged, and the father had retired on a well-earned pension and some small savings made during the final years of his working life. The children, until they had other claims on them, had always behaved generously to their parents, but when an old naval officer ventured to condole with the father on the early marriages they had made, he replied with astonishment and an unmistakable mixture of reproof, 'Oh, Law, sir, I'm not so selfish as that comes to!' The history of a few working-class families observed for a long period affords more valuable data than any number of isolated facts.

Very often, as Vauvenargues said, 'Nous querellons les malheureux pour nous dispenser de les plaindre.' Not long since an intelligent man complained to me of the principles of the Charity Organisation Society, or rather of the way in which they are often carried out by persons who make no allowance for environment and local standards of conduct. 'Of course,' he said, 'it's perfectly true that a man ought never to have been drunk in his life, and ought never to have done this or that or the other, and the same thing is true of his wife and even his children, but if you apply this standard too rigorously you must very soon find yourself refusing to help people who, on the whole, are well worth assistance. And it would only be fair
to try and find out what a man has done, as well as what he has not done. Perhaps you would discover that although he has not provided for his own old age he provided for his parents, and has helped to keep his sister’s orphan children from the workhouse. I think that in giving assistance one could to some extent be guided by the neighbours’ opinion of the case—when it is favourable, I mean. I know there may be any amount of prejudice against a family for no adequate reason. In a colliery district, for instance, you need never expect to hear a good word of people who make a practice of keeping their front door closed in the daytime! But I maintain that people who in their own immediate neighbourhood are held to be "respectable" have met the only standard that it is just to apply.’

Certainly he was right in demanding that the whole course of an applicant’s life should be considered, and not isolated acts or omissions. ‘Ce que peut la vertu d’un homme ne se doit pas mesurer par ses efforts, mais par son ordinaire,’ and it is only just to measure his failings by the same rule.

If we tried more consistently to realise the conditions of our neighbours’ lives, less effort would be wasted because applied too late. Just as lazy or inexperienced gardeners allow weeds to go to seed before they pull them up, so feeble-minded girls and half-witted lads are permitted by those in power to fall into shame and misery, and then attempts as desperate as they are costly are made to ‘reform’ those who are no more capable of deliberate, self-seeking vice than they are of the virtues which demand prudence and self-restraint, and who, if given the lasting protection that their unalterable childishness
demanded, could have led an innocent and useful life. There is a family in London whom I have known from the days of their childhood, and whose ages at present are from twenty-eight to thirty-four. The mother was a most respectable, hard-working woman, but an unhappy home had produced a strange twist in her character. She lived with a man who would gladly have married her, but she steadily refused to go through the ceremony, because 'she didn't choose to be knocked about, nor to see her children treated bad, neither.' During her lifetime he remained fairly steady, but when she died, leaving him with a boy and three girls between four and ten years of age, he gave way to drink and idleness. The children were taken charge of by his widowed stepmother, a charwoman, who supported them on her scanty earnings and the father's small and irregular contributions. The children were sweet-tempered and good-looking, and caused her little active anxiety, but from the beginning they were of low intellect. As the boy, the eldest, was the most intelligent, and they formed a descending scale to the youngest, who was practically an idiot, bad food, unavoidable neglect, and consequent anæmia had probably much to do with the state of their mind. They did not, however, belong to that peculiarly distressing class of defectives so little noted by statisticians and so sadly familiar to small employers of labour—persons capable of acquiring literary education, and in some cases specially excelling in arithmetic, but unable to apply themselves to even the simplest forms of manual labour.

The boy became a casual labourer; he is somewhat idle, and has never earned enough to support a wife,
but he has a decided preference for respectable society, and has kept clear of all serious trouble. The eldest girl has had five illegitimate children, all born in the workhouse, and two of them survive. The paternity is not denied, but she has never asked, or received, any assistance from their father. She is industrious and fairly strong, and although her mind is obviously weak, she earns good wages as laundrymaid at a public institution. The second girl was of a most attractive disposition and appearance, clean and hard working, but feebler in mind and body than her sister; no observant person could have talked to her for five minutes without discovering that she had less sense of moral responsibility than an average child of eight. She has had three children; all were born in the workhouse, and all died within eighteen months of their birth. The father is unknown. The third sister was so unmistakably defective that she never succeeded in obtaining regular work anywhere. She also had three children, of unknown paternity, born in the workhouse. The first died; the second, a strangely beautiful boy, was legally adopted by a childless couple who, a year later, were doing their best to get rid of him; after the birth of the third the authorities at last intervened and placed her under restraint.

None of these girls were ever accused of idleness, dishonesty, ill-temper, or cruelty, and they were singularly free from greed and self-indulgence. The two elder ones in earlier life were always great favourites with their mistresses, and were given chance after chance of regaining their character. More charitable agencies than I could number have, at various times, been interested in all three, but no one seemed to
have the will or the power to do the one thing which was necessary for their salvation.

In connection with this family history I must raise the protest that children are far too lightly handed over to childless persons offering to adopt them. It should be remembered that, even at the best, there is usually something not quite normal, something capricious, emotional, and excitable about these persons, and any child entrusted to them needs to be kept under strict surveillance. Among other causes of disturbance it sometimes happens that the adoptive father loses his employment and falls into distress. In such cases, parents’ attitude towards their real offspring is one almost of apology, while adopted children are apt to be regarded as the cause of the misfortune, or, at any rate, as a serious aggravation of it. In other instances, the adoptive parents have too soon despaired of having a family of their own, and then the adopted child is in a far worse position than a stepchild. The only people to whom I should feel inclined to entrust orphan or deserted children would be to those who had married early in life and had satisfactorily disposed of their own family, and then at the age of fifty or thereabouts, found their house dull and silent without the sound of little voices and the trample of little feet. And, in any case, it must never be expected that the child will receive the same love and care as it would from the most ordinary parents. Not long ago I heard rejoicings over the fact that Mrs. So-and-So had been given charge of a child, and what an excellent woman she was. One day I met her with the child and stopped to speak to them, and although the little creature was clean and well-dressed and apparently well-fed,
I was struck by its extraordinary passivity. When I kissed it, it was neither pleased nor frightened, nor had the faintest idea that the caress should be returned. Involuntarily I exclaimed, 'She does not know how to kiss!' 'She is isn't mine, miss,' said the woman coolly.
IV

THE MORAL EFFECT OF DOMESTIC LEGISLATION

What may be called the domestic legislation of the last forty or fifty years has had a profound effect upon the homes of the poor, as must always be the case, except when laws remain a dead-letter. Whether that effect is mainly good or mainly bad does not depend upon excellence of intention in the originators, but upon whether these regulations weaken family life or strengthen it, enforce parental responsibilities or relieve parents of all unwelcome burdens, and whether the ultimate aim is the independence, or the continued dependence, of those in whose interests the legislation claims to have been initiated.

The 'undiluted individualist' has his weak points like other people, and often shows little enough consideration for the individual. The individual 'ought' to be strong, active, industrious, far-seeing; at all times capable of self-protection. Whereas the individual, without regard to any further disabilities, is born a little boy, or, still more disadvantageous position, a little girl, and needs many a long year of protection and teaching before it can reasonably be expected to look out for itself. Furthermore, many of these incautious children choose delicate parents,
or those engaged in dangerous trades, and become orphans very early in life; while others make such an unhappy selection that their first conscious desire must be that they had been born in that more tolerable position. Provision has to be made to meet all these cases and many more.

It has well been said that 'there is no one in all the world with whom it is so difficult to sympathise as with the narrower fanatics of our own particular faith.' I have read arguments (not in English, I am happy to say) that it is worse than useless to prosecute and imprison even the most brutal of wife-beaters because their families will starve during their incarceration. The assumption that wife-beaters invariably support their families is not founded on fact; the children are commonly kept alive by the labour of the mother and the charity of the neighbours, and during the husband's enforced absence the one will work with less interruption and the others will give still more freely; while the assumption that no husband will be checked on the downward path, and no wife protected by the fear of police interference is still more gratuitous. Nor is there any sufficient foundation for the widespread masculine faith that a woman if adequately protected from marital violence will give way to every sin of the tongue. There soon arises the general belief that it is mean and contemptible to goad a man into committing an act for which he can legally be punished, while the wife, who has no protection from the law, feels a constant sense of injustice, and is apt to make herself as disagreeable as she dares, and likely at any moment to overstep the line.

I have seen fanciful pictures drawn of the husband who, after enduring days and hours of nagging, raises
his fist against his tormentrix, and has to expiate a single hasty blow by six months' rigorous imprisonment. I have never come across that husband or wife, and I doubt if any one has ever seen that magistrate! Very strangely, the picture is usually the work of highly-educated men; they unconsciously transfer their irritable nerves to the bodies of navvies and dock-labourers, and seem to delight in imagining the uncontrollable rage they would feel if shut up for life in narrow quarters with an illogical and wrangling wife. No such severe judges of wife-beaters are anywhere to be found as among the decent men of their own class, and they must be better able to estimate the force of the temptation than persons of the literary caste, in all times and climes a genus irritable. On one occasion I overheard two workmen vehemently endorsing each other's views as to the treatment that should be applied to wife-beaters, the elder adding more calmly, 'I 'm not fer sayin' women's perfeck; if a man wants that, lerrum look to 'umself!'

The standard usually set up by working-class women is not an exacting one: much is forgiven, and the usual phrase runs, 'He never laid a finger on me acept when he was in drink.' The lightest blow given deliberately would be more resented than a lifelong injury received when the husband was drunk, or even 'drunk with rage.' Doubtless nagging women exist, but the pathos and perversion of their lives seems to escape even those who have never suffered from them: a wife's natural desire is to gain power through love, but these unhappy women have failed, and are now trying to gain it through fear.

The 'undiluted individualist' will even argue that it is impossible to abolish any of the existing evils of
our social life by legislation, because it only brings about a mere rearrangement which alters the position of the pressure but does not annihilate its injurious force. Even so, is nothing gained? What is the suffering caused to a hundred people by the enforced payment of a few pence per head to protect one helpless child compared with the boundless misery of that child if left unprotected? What is the pain caused to the taxpayers of a large town compelled to pay the expenses of inspectors, public analysts, and occasional prosecutions when compared with the subtle starvation caused by adulterated food? Only while multiplying as far as may be necessary our inspectors of every description, let us remember that they are needed for no reason but the low average worth of our citizens, rich and poor alike, and the consequently low public opinion, and let us at the same time make strenuous efforts to raise the moral value of the members of every class in the community. The ultimate protection from the thousand ever-changing forms of vice and fraud and cruelty can only be found in the general purity, honesty, humanity, and generosity of feeling.

We must also keep in mind the fact that officials soon form a special class, some of whose interests are at variance with the general weal, and whose opinions are therefore only to be accepted with the proverbial grain of salt. Specialists, particularly when dealing with public money, even when they have no axe to grind, lose sight of all proportion between the moral claims of those who are and those who are not their clients. No expense or sacrifice is too great to be borne by the latter to secure the most trivial or uncertain benefit for the former. The head of a large
asylum for the insane once said to me, 'If people wish their relatives to recover they should never send them to an asylum.' 'You think they ought to nurse them themselves?' I asked doubtfully, remembering the terrified incapacity that most people show when dealing with 'anything mental.' 'No, no; of course there must be properly trained attendants.' 'Outside a hospital, one nurse would be insufficient for one patient. She could not be on duty day and night.' 'No, no; there would have to be two. In fact——' He broke off, apparently not liking to suggest that there ought to be three. 'But the rest of the family could not be entirely sacrificed to the madman,' put in another opponent. 'Suppose he objected to visitors of any kind? You know that's a common form.' 'Oh, of course he must have his own rooms entirely separate from the rest of the house, and stay in them when he chooses.' Now this doctor had been brought up in a frugal Scottish home. When a friend once asked him, 'Did you cost your father more than a pound a week when you walked the hospitals?' he promptly replied, 'If I had he could not have paid it!' His wife, his acquaintances, his patients were all persons of narrow means, but there were simply no bounds to what he would have conscientiously called 'necessary expenditure,' if there had been any public funds under his control.

There is also great fear that the specialist should lose sight of causes and deal only with symptoms. He sets himself with the utmost eagerness and self-devotion to 'cure' or to 'train' the mentally and physically and morally deficient, but he does not ask earnestly and insistently how his clients came to be in this state, nor whether it is really inevitable that the
supply should be kept up. It is no exaggeration to say that one district nurse in the course of five years' work may easily save ten infants from total blindness, and ten times that number from weakened eyesight. She can also help to reduce the list of victims to phthisis and many other infectious diseases, and greatly reduce the loss of life in childbirth—a loss provocative of far more misery than the equally needless loss of healthy infant life. A very great number of young people reach hospitals, homes for cripples, homes for waifs and strays, reformatories, prisons, or their graves chiefly because they were early left motherless. The blame is commonly thrown on the stepmother, but in many cases where the father remains a widower he seems to need no tutor in harshness, injustice, and positive cruelty.

In hospital life one of my greatest mental annoyances was the constant iteration of the phrase, 'such an interesting case.' From the lips of a learned physician or a widely experienced matron it might be tolerable, but from nurses and medical students who could not have diagnosed measles or bandaged a sprained ankle it was more than I could endure. I constantly told my probationers, 'As far as you and I are concerned, an "interesting case" is when a respectable working-man breaks his leg, or receives some similar injury, and by careful nursing we can send him home to earn his children's living a few weeks earlier than would otherwise have been possible. What you call "interesting cases" may be interesting to specialists in morbid pathology, but they have nothing to do with nurses, and are of little concern to the general practitioners under whom you will spend your lives in working.'
Prevention of evil is in the power of the intelligent, practical, house-to-house worker, but prevention rarely excites the same enthusiasm as attempts at cure. Prevention means discipline for all, while the dimmest prospect of cure is commonly interpreted as a general permission to do as you choose, coupled with the promise that the crooked shall be made straight as soon as the charitable public, or the State have sufficiently subsidised the specialist.

Even in cases where children appear to be fairly well cared for, one cannot always be certain at whose expense it is done, and whether the responsibility rests on the right shoulders. Two years ago an inspector of the N.S.P.C.C. asked me if I would occasionally visit a family living in an isolated cottage with a large, utterly neglected garden, and ascertain from the mother if they all had enough to eat. I replied that I frequently met the children, and that they were among the fattest in the neighbourhood, and that I thought it peculiarly creditable, considering that the mother was so crippled by rheumatism that all her work had to be done as she moved herself about in a wheeled chair. 'Creditable, certainly, but not to the right person. The husband has always been lazy and self-indulgent, and during the last eighteen months he has hardly given her enough to pay the rent.' 'How do they manage to live? There is no other cottage within half a mile, and she never leaves the house, as she can only move on a dead level.' 'She has an unmarried brother, a very decent chap, living nine miles off, and every week he has been bringing over a supply of food. He never sends money, because it would be worse than useless, and once or twice when he could not get away from his
work the children have been half starved. I have been to see him and told him that he is simply letting his brother-in-law slip from bad to worse, and that I can’t well put the screw on him until these supplies are stopped. I have promised him that his sister and the children shall not suffer if he follows my advice, but it’s rather difficult for me to get out there often enough to be sure that they don’t. I have induced the man’s employer to give him another chance, and perhaps he will turn over a new leaf. One or two people have been giving a great deal of help to the mother, but it isn’t a case for help. It’s a case for hardening your heart and keeping the man’s nose to the grindstone. I’ve made him sit up, I can tell you!

In addition to protection from ill-treatment, the child needs the aid of the State as over-lord to ensure that it receives the indispensable minimum of education. It is a matter that cannot safely be left entirely to the discretion of the parents, especially in those classes where there is no strong public opinion to stir up indifference or check undesirable eccentricity. The love that English parents feel for education in the abstract may be gauged by the amount that the majority of cultivated men provide for daughters who will never be called on to earn their living, and why should one expect more of artisans and labourers? At the present day the average education of the women of the upper middle-classes is almost as bad as ever it was. The sons go to public-schools and the university, while one cheap governess is considered sufficient for the daughters—especially if she is a foreigner, unprovided with the brevets which would enable her to teach in her own country. The
marvel is not that these girls know little, but that they know anything at all, and they owe such literary education as they have partly to the fact that the cheap governess is not always as ignorant and unconscientious as the parents deserve that she should be, and partly to the general dulness of their lives. Among the aristocracy there have always been more liberal traditions; the girl who wishes to learn is generally provided with the means to do so, but her parents are rarely in the smallest degree anxious that she should use them.

Compulsory education has done much to raise the status of children, and has rendered their average lot incomparably happier. Not only have most of them been released from the premature toil in field and mine and factory which stunted mind and body, but an indirect check has been placed upon the employment of married women, thus relieving their children from the domestic drudgery and responsibilities which weighed them down at a still earlier age. I asked a woman who is not yet fifty what was the first incident in her life that she could clearly recollect, and she replied, 'Scrubbing the kitchen floor while mother was out at work.' 'How old were you?' 'I can't have been more than six, for my brother was tied in a little chair and I was minding him, and he was only three years and nine months younger than me. Then a baby came, another boy, and most of my time was taken up with him.' 'Are your brothers living?' 'Oh no; they both died as children.' Small wonder, poor little souls! And yet I have heard and read many laments that little girls are wasting their time at school instead of staying at home and learning the whole duty of woman,
which would appear to be producing babies and leaving them to the eldest baby to 'mind,' while she ruins her health supplementing her husband's wages by the roughest and most exhausting class of labour. Even at the present day girls of nine or ten often nurse a fifteen-pound baby for more hours than a strong man would like to hold an equal weight with similar care.

Gratuitous primary education has probably done little to lower wages, and practically nothing to decrease thrift or increase the number of improvident marriages, as 'learning' had never ranked among the necessaries of life. But it has unfortunately done a great deal towards dissociating superior working-class parents from their children's education. Not realising that they are still among those who pay the piper, they seem to have lost all desire to call the tune, although their opinions, if they grasped the duty of forming and expressing them, ought to be thoroughly well worth having. It is also to be feared that the abolition of fees has a serious and most disproportionate effect upon filial gratitude. The mothers of the present day spend far more in making their children clean and smart for school than they save on the remitted fees, but the pence carried weekly to school made a much deeper impression of parental self-sacrifice. Men and women of all ages tell me with pride how their parents paid twopence, fourpence, and even sixpence a week for their schooling, but this will soon be a thing of the past. An extraordinary value is set upon money by young children of all classes, and it is a mental peculiarity for which allowance should be made.

Provided that legislation does not greatly outstrip
the belief of the ordinary citizen and his practice in his better moments, it can do much to accelerate the progress of those who have fallen, or remained behind; but a wholesome public opinion must first be formed by other agencies. Laws designed to prevent the spread of infectious fevers have been an almost unqualified success; they have saved innumerable homes from poverty and desolation, they have not only reduced the number of cases and the proportion of fatal cases, but have greatly increased the proportion of cases which attain complete recovery, instead of merely surviving with shattered health and weakened faculties. In London it is a well-established joke to say of any child who looks remarkably sturdy, 'I s'pose he's had the fever.' The people at large are satisfied that these laws are for the general benefit, and opposition has practically died out. Even the parent who finds on his return from work that the child, so unaccountably 'contrary' during the last few days, has been removed to the fever hospital during his absence, and without waiting for the formality of receiving his consent, raises no outcry; and although he is invariably astonished and indignant when presented later on with a very modest bill, his neighbours show no sympathy of a militant kind. On the other hand, a large part of the excellent legislation with regard to water-supply and general sanitation is practically a dead-letter both in town and country. The general public is well enough educated to realise the dangers of scarlet fever, diphtheria, or typhoid, but at present they have no effectual faith in the slower and more insidious dangers of insufficient or unwholesome water and neglected drainage. Moreover, the poor are seldom or never in a position
to put any pressure upon their landlords, and dare not make open complaints of the condition of their houses.

Laws intended to abolish the employment of young children may be regarded as completely successful all along the main lines of action, and as being fully supported by the opinion of the average parent, but laws for protecting 'young persons' from excessive hours of labour are to a great extent inactive (except when they are employed in large numbers), and attempts to bring them to bear on any particular case meet with scant sympathy from the poorest classes, being generally looked on as unreasonable clogs on the 'young persons' powers of earning money.

My experience in the homes of the poor leads me to believe that the much-abused errand-boy is probably the most unprotected person in the kingdom. It is often his own fault that he is an errand-boy, but to go back to the preliminary excuse for all State intervention, he was very young when he was born, and his parents were not much older in the ways of wisdom; while the majority of the boys had no choice. It was that or nothing, and there are degrees of hardship in the occupation, just as there were degrees of hardship in slavery. Personally I am in doubt whether the chemist's boy during the winter months, or the greengrocer's during the summer, is the most to be pitied, but one day when I was complaining to the butcher's wife of the extreme irregularity with which I was served, she explained, 'My sons used to do all the work themselves, but now it is more than they can manage, and your house is on the boy's round, and of course it is impossible for us to get a boy worth having. No one in his senses would be a butcher-boy if there was anything else
he could be. We advertise for a lad and get plenty of answers, but as soon as they know the address they back out.' And then she gave me some details of butcher-boys' lives which are not known to the general public, who persist in regarding them as models of gay insouciance.

But to return to the errand-boy in his home: when delayed in poor neighbourhoods, I frequently found that he did not arrive before eleven, and on Saturday he—and only too often the poor little Saturday-boy in addition—did not appear until midnight. All this was taken quite as a matter of course, and so was the excessive weight of most of the baskets that he had been carrying from morning till night. I thought these boys had been employed exclusively in low-class shops, but later on I had a furnished house for some months in the residential part of the town, and I dealt with my landlady's tradesmen, who were among the best in the place. Nevertheless, it was quite a common thing for boys to bring parcels between nine and ten o'clock in the evening, and on two occasions very young boys came at eleven. Even if my house were the last they visited, they had two miles to walk before reaching their beds. Lodging just outside another town, I often had to take my letters in to catch the nine-thirty post, and on my return up the hill, small errand-boys, who had been unable to secure a companion, walked in my shadow. In reply to my question as to where they were going at that hour, they would gabble the address of houses a mile further on, and the smallest of them would ask, with ill-concealed anxiety, not how far they had to go, but whether it was 'beyond the lights.' Their fears did not seem
to be of a ghostly kind, for when I asked what they dreaded to meet there was one reply, 'Drunken men.' This was eight years ago, and I fear that several of those little fellows, their one form of capital heedlessly squandered, are already 'on the roads.' One, I know, is in prison; as a child of eleven he worked even on Sundays, delivering newspapers at the outlying cottages and farmhouses. The father was in regular work, and so—worse luck!—was the mother.

Even in the non-manufacturing districts childhood is not yet entirely relieved from excessive and premature manual labour. A country-girl one day asked me to read a letter that she had written in answer to an advertisement. It began: 'I am nineteen years of age, and have been nearly ten years in service.' The date of the letter was 1906, and the statements were strictly true.

Many theorists, and still more, rule-of-thumb workers, assert that children must be made to work steadily in their earliest years, or they will never be worth anything. My experience of men and women who have been toilers from infancy is that they rarely learn either to do anything really well, or to do it with an intelligent economy of labour; all through life they retain the bungling, makeshift, ill-judged methods of early childhood. As a trivial example of what I mean: I found that a woman of nearly thirty, who told me that as a child of six she had often sewed for several hours a day, always tied a knot in her cotton, very slowly and using both hands, instead of forming it by an almost invisibly rapid twist between the finger and thumb of her left hand. When I remarked on this peculiarity she told me that her mother
had always knotted her cotton in the same way, and that her mother ‘had stitched wristbands for linen shirts when she was four.’

An acquaintance sent her young cook, aged about twenty, to learn butter-making under a County Council teacher, and said afterwards with great surprise, ‘She does it excellently, although she knew nothing on earth about it two months ago.’ I should have been inclined to say because, and not although. If she had been ‘helping’ in an old-fashioned dairy from the time she was ten or eleven, it would have been practically impossible to teach her in such a brief period.

In early life I was often told a sailor’s yarn of a captain and a cook who were to be tried by court-martial on the same day. The captain, who was taking matters so lightly that he had a ‘heart at leisure from itself,’ observed the disconsolate demeanour of the cook, and exclaimed, ‘Cheer up, my man! we’re both in the same boat, and look at me. Jolly as a sandboy.’ ‘So should I be, sir,’ replied his fellow-prisoner, ‘if I was going to be tried by cooks.’ This fairly represents what was the ordinary attitude of the working-classes with regard to laws and their administration; but the general spirit has changed. At the worst, laws designed for the protection of the poor are regarded as well-meant but ignorant interference.

A wider and most beneficial change in public opinion might be made if the newspapers that are commonly read among the working-classes gave more space to prosecutions and lawsuits which are of legitimate interest to them, and pandered less to a mere love of horrors. The police-news could be more instructive
without losing the intense interest that it has for them.

Publicity has not always the desired effect. I saw two ragged, dirty, but lively and well-fed boys amusing themselves by reading the List of Convictions outside a railway station. No special interest was excited until they came to the account of a boy about their own age who, for placing an obstruction on the line, had been sentenced to receive six strokes with the birch rod. This was read aloud, twice over. Then they looked at one another, and simultaneously exclaimed, 'I lay he sung!' After which they roared with laughter, rubbed their hands, and simply pranced with delight. I do not know whether they would have liked to witness the scene, but I had as a patient a little girl of seven, the daughter of a struggling butcher, and I have more than once heard her say coaxingly, 'O daddy, are you going to kill a lamb? Do let me come and hold it by the leg!'

The rights of old age need to be championed almost as much as the rights of childhood need State protection, and we can never claim to be a civilised nation until this is recognised—or has become unnecessary. Only, while children can do little or nothing to protect themselves and advance their own interest, a reasonable amount of foresight would generally secure the material means of an endurable old age.

The essential unity of family life is shown by the fact that even the people who were already elderly benefited indirectly by the laws to restrict child-labour. Not only in the outside world but in the domestic circle their value was raised when child-toilers were no longer always at hand. Some years ago, when checks were first placed on sending young
children to public-houses, the immediate result was that grandfathers and grandmothers fetched the beer, doubtless receiving a small fee (as the children had done) when fetching it for those outside their own family. Teetotallers who would have sacrificed half their possessions rather than allow their children to enter a public-house, used to complain bitterly of their being bribed to go there by the neighbours, especially by secret drinkers. Later generations will of course benefit still more by the restrictions on the labour of children; their improved health and education will make old age more general and in every way more tolerable.

With regard to all opportunities of secondary education provided for the poor, one of the greatest difficulties will be to prevent them from being seized by persons whose means are far too large to give them any just claim on State assistance. A certain proportion of the middle-classes are alternately complaining that the country is being beggared by doing so much for the poor, and that it will be ruined by doing nothing for themselves. The outcry is often as hypocritical as it is ignorant. Go into almost any art school, in almost any neighbourhood, and you will find that practically the whole of the day pupils are children of men who could well afford to pay the open-market price of drawing-lessons, the actual price paid being often considerably less than half that sum. And because it is 'so cheap,' and 'fills up their time,' girls with no talent whatever for drawing, and whose general education ought to be carried on for at least three years longer, are allowed to spend five days a week in an ill-ventilated studio, lunching on tea and cake instead of mutton and
potatoes. Nor is this all: I have known girls, whose parents' incomes ranged from four to six hundred a year, allowed, winter after winter, to attend the cheap evening classes. The headmaster of an art school in an exceptionally poor district was reproached with the large proportion of honours and scholarships gained by one three miles away, and protested indigantly, 'My pupils are the class for whom art schools were intended, working-people of both sexes who hope to apply their knowledge to the trade by which they earn their living, and who can only afford to study by gas-light. What fair comparison can be drawn?'

In one school I saw a politely worded placard reminding the day-pupils that although they were within their rights in attending on Saturday afternoons and in the evening if they chose, they must remember that it would be the teachers' duty to attend at these times almost exclusively to those who could only come after business hours. In a technical school, where morning lessons were given at about a fourth of the open-market price for teaching of equal value, I have seen servants in livery collect the pupils' books and tools and carry them to their carriage. On one occasion a student remarked to her neighbour at the greasy bench: 'I did so want to finish this to-day, but I am afraid I must go. The Drawing-room is at two.' The only ex-Board School pupil commented innocently, 'She'll have to make haste if she wants to see anything.' The first speaker continued, 'After all, I think I can stay a little longer. I can trust my maid to have everything ready for me.' With less innocent intent another girl muttered, 'She needn't hurry. Doubtless she has the private entrée.' I learnt afterwards that this supposition was a fact.
Who is it that makes most use of public reading-rooms and free libraries? Those who could well afford to buy a newspaper and read it at home, and have given up their subscription at Smith’s or Mudies’, and carry away seven volumes in a strap for their family. Like the intrusive day pupils, they are within their rights, but the really equal-handed course would be only to permit the exchange of books at hours when the working-classes are usually at liberty. One practicable course is for the middle-classes to give up grumbling and own that the spoils fall chiefly to them and their children. The ‘more excellent way ’ would be to try and teach the poor what means of instruction and amusement are open to them, and explain the formalities that must be gone through before they can claim their share.

The probability that to him that hath more will be given, and that the claims of the helpless poor will be overlooked is no new thing. We could learn it, if we cared to take the trouble, from the history of nearly every endowed charity in existence, whether thousands of pounds are involved yearly or forty shillings. Not long since I was staying in a village where once a year a certain amount of coal was given away. There were very few really poor people, so few that it was simply impossible for the responsible persons not to know them, and to know that their poverty arose from age and infirmity. None of that coal reached these poor old people; it all went to men in the prime of life who would have had no difficulty in buying all they wanted, and I was told by the residents that the usual principles of selection had been followed. In a neighbouring village there was a small endowment which had originally been
intended to pay the school fees of children of very poor parents. At the present day it is used as prizes for regular attendance, and divided between the children who have not been absent more than three times. For several years the main part has been divided between some delicate and over-eager little girls who live close to the school, and boys who were the carefully-tended children of an artisan whose relatives were farmers, shopkeepers, and professional men. In another place where there was a similar endowment, at least three of the prize-winners were the schoolmaster’s sons.

What is done on a small scale is still more likely to be done on a large one, and it is a consideration which even the most ardent believers in State-aid can scarcely venture to ignore. To pass laws giving grants of money, or money’s worth, to the poor is easy enough; to see that they even receive these gifts (much less the supposed benefits arising from them!) is a very difficult one, and always must be as long as ignorance and apathy and greed and lack of public spirit abound. Does it not stand to reason that the man possessed of cunningly devised levers will be able to raise a heavier weight than he who has only those supplied in his bodily frame? Generally speaking, those of my patients who were able to extract money from one source were able to extract it from half a dozen.

Many forms of charity are at present desirable and even necessary, but there is not one which I should wish to see endowed, nor, indeed, with more funds in hand than are necessary for regularity of work and to tide over the years of exceptional depression, when people in general are following the example
of one of Miss Austen’s characters and economising in what they give away. As long as—and even longer than—a charitable organisation is really needed and doing the work it professes to do the necessary funds will be forthcoming. If there is no such science as Political Economy, Adam Smith cannot have known anything about it, but no one can deny that human nature exists, and that he knew a great deal about it, especially in relation to endowments. One portion of his indictment against them is, ‘It is the interest of every man to live as much at his ease as he can; and if his emoluments are to be precisely the same whether he does or does not perform some very laborious duty, it is certainly his interest, at least, as interest is vulgarly understood, either to neglect it altogether, or, if he is subject to some authority which will not suffer him to do this, to perform it in as careless and slovenly a manner as that authority will permit. If he is naturally active and a lover of labour, it is to his interest to employ that activity in any way from which he can derive some advantage, rather than in the performance of his duty, from which he can derive none.’ The State has often been induced to reform mismanaged charities, and to give a more useful direction to those which have become obsolete, but before a State endowment can be withdrawn, the enlightened and slowly increasing minority will have to hammer away at the elementary facts of human nature and common arithmetic for half a century. If for this reason only, charity is preferable to State aid. Even if old age pensions rapidly prove to be ten times more injurious to the general interest than their most consistent opponents at present believe, the youngest person
now consciously concerned in the matter will not live to see them withdrawn.

With regard to the probable effect of these pensions upon the saving habits of the community, it would have been worth while to make extensive inquiries into the results observable among the very large class of pensioners already in existence. These men are, as a whole, far more liberally educated and widely experienced persons than those who are to make old age their sole claim for consideration, and they have supplied the means for their pensions by what amounts to a compulsory reduction of their income while at work. My experience of pensioners has varied from the man with seven shillings a week to the man with £1100 a year, and has been chiefly among those whose pay ranged from £300 to £600. At all times in their career the knowledge that they would receive a pension seems to have acted as a direct check on saving, and on all but exceptional men. While on the active list they saved little or nothing because they had ‘a good retirement to look forward to’; when on the retired list they saved very little, because if the wife survives ‘she will manage all right on her pension’; the widow, though often torn by anxiety for the one or more daughters that she must leave behind her, saves nothing because it is impossible. I have known three instances in which men whose wives predeceased them, and who had received during their working lives from fifteen to eighteen thousand pounds, each left an only daughter penniless and ill-educated, and in two cases out of the three the unhappy women were, and always had been, partially crippled.

Pensions were granted to these men in the days
when their pay was small, and their average life short; their pay has been more than doubled, their necessary expenses have not increased, and their lives are longer, yet they save as little as they did in the old days. The great difference with regard to the new class of pensioners is, that instead of giving the pensions in circumstances resembling those in which they were originally granted to our sailors and soldiers, we are beginning the grant at a time when wages are higher, the necessaries of life cheaper, and the average working life longer than has ever been the case before.

I know villages where the old men and women are the children of fathers who worked for 7s. a week, and died in the workhouse if they lived to exhaust their miserable savings. They themselves, although wages did not rise to 12s. until the best of their working days were over, have all managed to achieve partial independence, and some among them are entirely independent. What these men and women have done with incalculable difficulty, their sons and daughters could do with comparative ease, for wages average between 15s. and 18s., food is cheaper, and old people working three days a week earn almost as much as their parents did in six days when they were in the prime of life.

The great disadvantage that townsmen rest under is that their working life is shorter than the countryman's, and that rent remains very high in proportion to any pension that they could provide for themselves, or can ever hope to receive, even from the most reckless and extravagant of governments. Could retired workmen be induced to live in the country? If so, it would be a benefit to town and country alike,
and an especial blessing to the numerous grandchildren who would spend a large part of the summer with them, attending the village school. It is to be feared that the conditions of country life with regard to housing, water-supply, removal of refuse, and facilities for shopping, must alter considerably before this becomes an attractive programme to the inhabitants of even the meanest streets.

It is an unfortunate fact that many more pleasures are open to old people in the town than in the country. In the country on a wet day there is never a place where those with no money to spend can find an hour's shelter or amusement, and if they wish to visit relatives living ten or twelve miles away there are no cheap means of transit. How often does a country-man hear a band, or see a procession, or even a squad of soldiers? The only newspaper he has an opportunity of buying appears once a week, and costs a penny; reading-rooms are scarce and poorly provided, and if there should be a small library, the books are only fit for children—and not always of much interest to them. If he goes for a walk he must return the moment he feels tired, or else rest his rheumatic limbs by the damp roadside. There are no parks with seats, and shelters, and playgrounds where his little grandchildren clamour to be taken. His one compensation is his garden, and the skill and knowledge which in so many cases make it an all-sufficient pleasure cannot be acquired late in life, any more than the specialised strength which enables him to dig and weed and hack when well past eighty years of age.

Before entering on any legislation of a merely palliative nature, and therefore tending to perpetuate
undesirable conditions of life, we ought sometimes to remind ourselves of that old-fashioned phrase, 'the dignity of man.' Figaro complained, 'On veut que le pauvre soit sans défauts. . . . Aux vertus qu'on exige dans un domestique, Votre Excellence connaît-elle beaucoup de maîtres qui fussent digne d'ètre valets?' To demand too much of the poor may be unreasonable, but it is at least a compliment; while to expect too little is an insult and an insidious injury. We should not ask a labourer on a guinea a week to display angelic powers, but let us more than equally beware that we deny him full humanity. The privilege of manhood is that what a man does not know he can learn, and that what is impossible to-day and difficult to-morrow may be relatively easy the day after. With a strange wrestling of religious doctrine, the lower the opinion we hold of our poorer neighbours, and the less we expect of them, the more we pride ourselves on our charity—that quality which we are told 'hopeth all things.' There is a homely Scottish proverb that we should take to heart, 'They are far ahint that canna follow.'

Past conditions of labour are soon forgotten, and the train of disabilities and weaknesses that they leave in their wake are apt to be regarded as ineluctable drawbacks of human life considered 'in the mass.' Rather more than thirty years ago I was visiting a rope factory, and was shown a room which seemed to me of immeasurable size, and which I was told was a quarter of a mile in length. Asking of what use it could ever have been, my guide informed me that when the machinery was in a more primitive state, boys were employed walking backwards down it, twisting a rope as they went. If one pictures the
fatigue of doing this for ten or twelve hours a day, it is not difficult to imagine why so many of their descendants were 'born tired,' a piece of slang which often conceals a pathetic truth.

It is hard to believe, by the way, that even at the date of my visit chain cables and steel hawser were practically unknown, and that the only visible attempts to bridge over the growing disparity between the strength of ropes and the strain placed upon them was represented by an impossibly clumsy cable twelve inches in diameter, and by a single man standing at a butcher's block with a sharp knife and engaged in cutting round and round the jagged outline of an ox's hide with almost as careful a parsimony as Queen Dido herself.

The poor set a high value upon personal interest shown in them as individuals, and a very low one on what they regard as merely official. I have given men and women many printed leaflets on the subject of sanitation, diet, etc., but I have never had the least reason to believe that they were read, much less marked and learned. If I found time to write the same information on a sheet of notepaper it was studied until it dropped to pieces, and then pasted on an old almanac and treasured for years. In connection with this, the growing custom of medical inspections at school may have a most widely beneficial effect. Those who take the maternal objections to this innovation too seriously are certainly not putting themselves in her place; her protests have frequently no deeper root than her unwillingness to give an extra bath. At an ambulance class a boy of ten had been hired to make himself generally useful, and the doctor asked him to take off his stockings so that his feet
might be bandaged by two of the pupils. He made some excuse about his garters (two dingy strips of calico tightly knotted) which the doctor met by producing a pocket-knife. Still the boy hesitated. 'Mother said I wasn’t to.' The doctor’s practice for a quarter of a century had been entirely among wealthy people, and he said soothingly, 'Oh, perhaps your mother thought the room would be cold. She did not know what a nice fire we should have. Come, take them off. Be quick!' and he slipped his finger under the edge of one to hasten the process. Brought to bay, the child explained in a whisper, directed at his tormentor’s ear but audible all over the room, 'She didn’t have time to wash me!'

The Workmen’s Compensation Acts, combined with the general inability of the poor to deal with sums of money larger than those they are accustomed to handle, has led to an incalculable amount of waste, drunkenness, immorality, and cruelty. The Acts may be excellent in themselves, but they lack some of the most necessary safeguards. It is fair that the material cost of an accident should be borne by the employer, instead of being thrown on the general public, but it is grossly unfair that compensation should be paid in such a fashion that the necessary cost has first to be paid by the employer, and then, after the moral ruin of the family supposed to be benefited, must be paid five or six times over out of rates and taxes or voluntary charity. If social action and reaction were more closely considered, and if Acts of Parliament were founded on more knowledge of human nature, especially of the weaknesses which are half mental, half moral, and of the practical difficulties of life among the poor, there would be a larger margin of profit in
‘remedial legislation’ than has ever yet been perceived by unprejudiced observers.

To humane persons, one of the most pressing questions at the present day is whether the lowest, most unorganised, and helpless classes of workers—chiefly women and girls—would be benefited by the establishment of a minimum wage, and whether it would be possible to carry out the system effectually.

Perhaps a fuller recognition of the conditions under which these ill-paid toilers were produced might give us a clearer idea of the problems to be solved. When charitable people first observe that these persons are ill-paid, and consequently badly fed, housed, and clothed, they aim at subduing what are demonstrably symptoms, not causes, and try to improve their condition—more especially that of the girl workers—by supplying house-room, food, and amusement at less than cost price. Later on it slowly dawns on them that the persons who benefit by their charitable endeavours are the employers and the consumers, not the employed. Those who see a little more deeply into the matter realise that the work that the girls do is worth very little more to the community than the miserable pay they receive, and try by technical instruction and teaching of all kinds to raise their value in the market. In a varying proportion of cases they succeed, and even if the results were far smaller the work would be well worth doing, but they find an enormous residue too weak in body and mind and will to be rendered capable of earning higher wages. This drives them a step further back in their inquiry: Why are these girls less fitted for the struggle of life than the others? In many cases their fathers’ wages were too low, or too irregular to provide sufficient
nourishment for the whole family, and the larger share of food went to the boys, just as inevitably as in the struggling middle-classes, if there is not enough money to educate all the children it is the girls who remain untaught. In other cases it would be found that the father’s wages were sufficient, but that from selfishness, ignorance, or vanity the money had been mis-spent.

Every condition of working-class life can be traced to things of the mind, and it is only through things of the mind that the world can be changed: If the large majority of girls are worth good wages, nearly all girls will receive them; if only the minority are skilled and capable, many even of that minority will not receive their due. In cases where wages are inhumanly low an increase of wages may, without any alteration in the workers’ character or knowledge, lead to an increase in the value of the work they perform, but there are narrow limits to this almost mechanically beneficent action. As soon as wages are high enough to allow the bare necessaries of healthy life, they cannot, as it were, be raised in advance, the quality of the work must be raised first. Many of us can recall instances where rapid economic changes have suddenly raised the wages of certain classes of men without allowing time for alteration in education, character, and habits, and have led for a generation or more to their degradation rather than their elevation. All things considered, the indirect effects of improved moral, physical, and technical education, reaching employers as well as employed, are more likely to lead to a ‘living wage’ than any legislation originated or passed ‘on the gad,’ heated by the strife of our political Codlins and Shorts.
When I first began district nursing, one of the facts of daily life which struck me most forcibly, and for which I was utterly unprepared, was to find that physical disgust at the sight of illness, and unwillingness to come into the smallest personal contact with a sufferer, are by no means uncommon among the poor. In the case of a few men, and perhaps four or five times the number of youths, this moral defect led to active cruelty, but in women it usually stopped short at neglect and aversion. While the persons displaying it are very young, or if there is anything peculiarly ghastly or repulsive in the nature of the illness in question, there are, of course, many excuses to be made; but I have known an elderly mother who could not wash the face of a slowly dying daughter, whose skin was as smooth and soft as a child’s, and a middle-aged one who would perform no personal service whatever for a lad of sixteen in the last stages of consumption ‘because it made her feel that queer.’ If such persons acknowledged this shrinking to be a weakness, if they struggled against it, or were even ashamed of it, one could forgive them, but they are proud of the defect. As a rule, all that one can do in these cases is to find the never-failing
neighbour possessed of that truer sensitiveness which is conscious of nothing but the sufferer’s compelling needs.

When sick persons are unmistakably dying, one may say that reluctance to touch them, even to feed them, is generally found. No amount of labour is grudged in keeping all the surroundings exquisitely clean, but strictly personal attendance is avoided. In many instances the friends are, in addition, plainly unwilling that the nurse should touch a dying patient, and at the back of this reluctance there seems to be some idea of impiety, a dread of appearing to take part in a struggle against inexorable fate, and also a fear of hastening the end by mistaken efforts. One of the greatest women the world has ever produced said that she always acted as if she believed herself to be immortal: a little more of this spirit is needed among the poor. Death appears to be too near them; it enervates and fills too large a part of their thoughts, especially among women. For a definite object they will try to live; a woman, for example, who has young children, or a man who knows that his wife is helpless and unprovided for. Life for life’s sake is meaningless, or becomes so at the first touch of pain and weakness; there is little conception that it is a duty to hold the post that is yours as long as you can, and whether its importance is demonstrable or not.

One curious superstition that I found in hospital work is that the dead must be buried in white socks. No provision was made by the authorities for this, nor do I think that socks are ever supplied by undertakers, but the displeasure occasioned by seeing the bodies laid out without them was so marked that I was obliged to beg for them from my friends. Such
great reverence is felt for the dead that any sign of respect shown to them is more valued than the utmost care and tenderness for the living. In a provincial hospital a little girl died after many weeks of nursing. She had been treated with especial indulgence and affection by the nurses, partly because she was a brave and patient sufferer, and partly because, being between seven and eight years old, she was just of an age to miss her mother intensely and lastingly. In after years I often met the mother; she never referred to the kindness shown to her child while living, but never omitted to make grateful mention of the hot-house flowers that the nurses had bought to lay on her coffin.

Small things are remembered, and great ones forgotten. For the nurse 'to do her duty' is nothing, but often if she goes the least step beyond it she is overwhelmed with gratitude. It must be owned, however, that the bounds of the nurse's duty are not narrow. I was protesting against some foolish habit of a district patient, assuring her that, however strong I might look, I should inevitably be ill if I indulged in it, and she replied frigidly, 'Of course it's yer dooty to keep well, nurse.'

It has often been noted that barbarous nations attribute a mysterious sacredness to personal names. In their eyes names have almost a distinct existence, and they show respect for a name chiefly by refusing to use it, or to permit others to do so, except on stated occasions. The same trait is found among the English poor, but respect takes the form of using names as frequently as possible. As a little girl, I remember being told by an old lady, 'My dear, if you are speaking to a duchess you need never use her name, but if you
are speaking to a charwoman, do it at least once a minute.’ Poor women cling to their names with extraordinary intensity; to ‘call them out of it,’ or not to call them by it early and often are equally unpardonable offences. I believe that at one time there were hospitals where it was usual to address patients by the number of their beds; at the present day such treatment would increase the death-rate, at least indirectly, by the number of those ‘discharged at own request.’ In district work I seldom ventured to knock at a door until I had ascertained the housewife’s surname; it was of far more immediate importance than the Græco-Latin titles of the patient’s disease.

Class suspicion and distrust make it intensely difficult for employers to help the young persons in their service. The parents seldom or never co-operate with them, and when they affect to do so, commonly act with double-facedness. Just as many parents of the upper classes try to maintain their children’s affection by making governesses and tutors do all the fault-finding while they keep the praise and rewards in their own hands, so the working-classes try to throw all the disagreeable part of their children’s training upon their superiors. Employers will tell parents that they wish their sons to attend evening classes and improve themselves with a view to future advancement. The parents profess to agree, and perhaps at heart really agree, but they will not accept the odium of telling their children so, and openly pity them for this restriction of liberty. Mistresses, at the secret and urgent request of mothers and grandmothers, refuse certain holidays to their young servants, or insist on their returning at an earlier hour.
than usual, and then find that no attempt whatever has been made to uphold their authority. Not long since a provincial doctor, standing on a railway platform, heard a cottage mother bid farewell to her daughter in these terms: 'Now mind you eat all you can, and do as little as you can, and come home when you 're tired of it.' This is exactly the mother who, if she had a private interview with the mistress, would assure her that, 'I've brought up all my children to work. I 've made my boys work, so you may reckon I have she.'

The literary education of the poor, from the recognition of Great A, Round O, and Crooked S upwards, has always been left to teachers, but at the present day an enormous number of lower middle-class mothers are forming the habit of sending their children to Council Schools to receive the whole of their instruction. It is most unfair that the community should be burdened with the teaching of these children, and it is unwholesome for the children themselves, while their intelligence excites the pride and ambition of the teachers, and sets a standard of mental attainments which is too great a strain upon the poorer pupils coming from totally illiterate homes.

It is not from laziness that these mothers shirk the duty of teaching their young children, for after disposing of them in this way they generally dismiss their servant and do all the housework themselves. This is a loss all round, and not least to the girl who was being well fed and kindly treated, receiving a practical preparation for the life of a working-man's wife, and unconsciously absorbing much of the teaching that was directly addressed to the children. One of these women, delicate and overburdened, said to
me, 'I know I don't teach my children as my mother taught me, but she was so even-tempered, and I'm so dreadfully afraid of being cross and irritable with them.' It did not seem to strike her that most of her irritability arose from physical work that was beyond her strength, and from want of fresh air and change of scene. In a servantless household with a high standard of cleanliness and comfort it is almost impossible for the house-mother to go regularly for walks, and etiquette forbids her to stand on the doorstep or lean out of open windows as her less refined neighbours do for hours at a time.

I never so clearly realised how greatly a higher standard of comfort and propriety increases the work of the house-mother as I did one day when, fresh from a workman's dwelling where six children had received a substantial tea without the use of a single plate, and with the aid of only two cups and one unpolished knife, I went into a small shop. The servantless mistress, pale and exhausted with the combined mental and physical efforts of taking care of the youngest child, making up the accounts, serving behind the counter, protecting a young errand-boy from her husband's irritable temper and unreasonable demands, smoothing down all the customers ruffled by his brusquerie, and preparing tea for seven persons in an upstairs parlour, was patiently explaining to a naughty little boy that she could not possibly sit down to table with him until he had changed his outdoor boots for a pair of slippers, brushed his hair, and washed his hands and face.

These well-meaning mothers seem to ignore the facts that they are needlessly exposing their children, while mere infants, not only to the germs of disease,
but to the insidious evil of coming into contact with low standards of speech, manners, and conduct, while their general health suffers from their being shut up in a stuffy schoolroom for five hours a day to learn an amount of the three R's which could easily have been acquired in half an hour at home. I knew one father whose time was at his own disposal in the early morning, and he had taught all his five children until they were eight years of age, and when they went to school they were considered well advanced. I asked how long a time they had spent over their daily lessons, and he said, 'I never kept them more than from ten minutes to three-quarters of an hour, and I never compelled them to learn. I don't understand young children well enough to be able to decide when they are out of sorts and when they are out of temper, and it is best to be on the safe side with these small creatures. If ever they said, "I don't want to," I used to say, "Neither do I: go and play."'

Working-class mothers are too busy and often too ignorant to teach even the youngest of their children, but that is no reason why tens of thousands of fairly well educated women should allow their little ones to acquire painfully and under unwholesome conditions knowledge that could have been almost insensibly absorbed. I hoped to see the day when not even the children of superior labourers would enter a schoolroom until they could read and write, and had some notion of arithmetic, and had received the most important parts of their moral and religious training, but the tide seems to be flowing the other way. Possibly in from twenty to thirty years' time there may be a reaction, and the daily imprisonment of infants in schools will be regarded as a mere *pis aller*. 
As an example of what it is possible even now for the poorest mothers to do when they are intelligent as well as devoted: A girl of eighteen, the daughter of a labourer, recently told me that her busy mother, with five children and a husband to 'do' for, and a large garden to look after, had taught her entirely until she was seven years old. At that age she could read, write, sew, and knit stockings, and almost immediately after going to school she was placed in the Third Standard—an elevation commonly reached by children of nine, after five years' instruction at the public expense—and she passed the Seventh Standard with ease before she was in her teens.

One excuse frequently made for sending these well-circumstanced infant children to school is that 'they learn to do as they are told.' They learn to do as the teachers tell them, but this has little effect upon their conduct at home and elsewhere, except in adding to and sweetening the joys of disobedience. A man, fresh from a year's compulsory service, told me that after the iron restraint of military discipline he and his comrades, especially those who had served two or three years, felt a positive pleasure in doing anything that they were asked not to do, even if the moment before the action it would have been indifferent to them, or even troublesome. He added that their mothers' common complaint of each one of them when they returned home was, 'How his temper has been spoilt! He never used to be angry if I found a little fault with him. And can I help criticising? His manners at table have become atrocious, he thinks only of himself, and his language is so full of the coarsest argot that I cannot bear his sisters to listen to it'; while the fathers protested, 'He has
relapsed into childishness. He cannot speak rationally upon any matter of public interest. One would imagine that he had spent his time in prison.' I have often heard conscription advocated on the ground that it would produce a disciplined race of workmen. If German workmen are amenable, it arises from home training, not from military discipline suddenly applied at nineteen or twenty years of age.

Another excuse given is, 'The children enjoy going to school.' In all my observations of very young children, boys and girls alike, these are the phases through which they pass with reference to school attendance: For two or three days (unless exceptionally shy and sensitive) they are delighted with the bustle and routine; then they try to shirk afternoon school, and then rebel against going either morning or afternoon. This period of rebellion seldom lasts less than two months, and in extreme cases it may last for a year or more. During this time the mother generally has to take the child to school herself, especially as the fiercest and most obstinate rebels are eldest or only children. In the north of England I knew a little boy who for a whole winter was taken to school literally tied to a sister of eleven or twelve. I also knew a girl who gained several months' respite for herself by threatening to drown the baby if she were compelled to go to school, and the mother, rightly or wrongly, believed that she was fully capable of carrying out the threat.

After this stormy period comes resignation, quickly followed by dependence upon school life for nearly every pleasure and excitement, and such a zealous regularity of attendance (artificially stimulated by what I heard a clergyman call 'those damnable
medals’) that they voluntarily go to school even when suffering the nameless wretchedness of the incubation of measles, scarlatina, etc., and, in some cases, when actually in the mid course of these diseases. A woman came to me in great distress a little time ago because four of her nephews, boys attending two different schools more than a mile apart, had been sent home in the middle of the morning by the doctor inspecting their classes, two because they were ‘peeling’ after scarlatina, and two because they were sickening for the same complaint. All four boys lived in the same house, and belonged to an ambitious artisan family. Quite recently I heard of a little country lad who, feeling too ill to walk to school, compelled his mother to carry him there. In a neighbouring house a second child would have done the same, but a stronger-minded grandmother put him to bed and kept him there as long as she thought fit. I never read newspaper paragraphs about presentations to children with a ‘record attendance’ without reflecting that each one of them may have innocently destroyed more lives than the most notorious murderer of the decade. If children under nine years old make from eighty to ninety per cent. of possible attendances throughout their school life, and older girls and boys make from eighty-five to ninety-five per cent., it is probably the utmost that they can do with safety to themselves and others. All the admiration and rewards should be given to the schools and teachers whose attendance register will bear examination from the wrong end. Let us trust to the discretion of good fathers and mothers, and instead of extolling A and B for coming to school with such inhuman regularity, let us spend our time and our money in
discovering why poor, neglected little Y and Z come to school seldom and profit little. If they are ill, what has been done to hasten and ensure their recovery? If ill-fed, ill-clothed, ill-companioned, or 'not under proper control,' let us ascertain on whose shoulders the responsibility rests, and enforce it. A health visitor in a Midland town told me that if she remonstrated with mothers for allowing children to go to school when ailing, and probably in an infective state, the usual defence was, 'They get into such trouble with the teachers if they don't go.' It was difficult to persuade them that the teachers were thankful to have sick children kept at home to be 'cosseted,' but most decidedly objected to receiving a plea of illness, and then finding that the sick child had been sent on an errand a couple of miles away, or allowed to play in the streets in all weathers until late in the evening. The same lady was told that a certain woman had refused to allow her children to enter a house where there was a case of measles, and it was cited as an example of her 'unneighbourly' conduct!

Two deadly errors are firmly held among the poor with regard to the most common of the infectious fevers: one is that you are 'bound to have 'em,' and the other is that they are of little consequence. When one remembers the views that were held in upper class nurseries not thirty years ago as to the advisability of 'having it all together,' one need not despair of eradicating these dangerous prejudices among the working-classes within a measurable time. I remember an instance where two girls suffering from measles, and living in a large, rambling country-house where service was plentiful and isolation would have been
easy, were deliberately allowed to associate with a child of three and a half and a baby of six months. The elder one, previously vigorous and healthy, suffered all through her childhood from deafness, swollen glands, etc.; later on consumption was with difficulty staved off, and may even yet claim her as a victim. The baby, now about thirty years of age, after a life of ill-health, is slowly dying of consumption in its most painful form. The family record had previously been entirely free from this disease.

'Mortals have a great power of being astonished at the presence of an effect towards which they have done everything, and at the absence of an effect towards which they have done nothing but desire it.' George Eliot's reference was primarily to parents of the non-educative type so strangely abundant, but a curious delusion of most of those persons recently 'set in authority' appears to be that they can act on impulse, and yet confidently name the result. Laws are proposed which, to all people with an elementary knowledge of workaday human nature, are a direct premium upon supineness and lack of resource, and the originators boldly christen the unborn results 'doing away with the evils of unemployment.' They anxiously desire to feed other people's children without inquiring into any of the circumstances of their lives, and apparently ignorant of the fact that even physical health does not depend upon bread alone, and solemnly declare that to do this is the only means of 'preserving a national asset.' They draw up a pension scheme full of direct and indirect discouragement to thrift, foresight, and honourable independence, and call it 'freeing life from the haunting nightmare of penniless old age.' A small pension may
be an excellent provision for those who have earned it, who have 'kept a home together,' and remained in touch with their relatives, and are surrounded by personal friends of all ages who will wait upon them and protect them in their growing infirmity. It is worse than useless when presented to the friendless old man or woman who has failed to do these things.

Although few active steps are taken to uphold the theory, we are at least told that 'the receiver is worse than the thief'; and perhaps the day may yet dawn when unchecked benevolent impulses will be regarded in their true light as a socially dangerous form of self-indulgence, and credulous persons of full age, and having had the usual opportunities of acquiring experience and testing evidence, will share the blame with those whom they permit to rob and deceive them. I have never forgotten a garden-party that I attended some years ago in a remote country district. Eight of the neighbouring clergy were present with their wives and daughters, and instead of turning eagerly to the non-clerical part of the assembly, as they usually do on these occasions, they all seemed to be seeking one another in order to relate something of peculiar interest to their own cloth. In every case the leisurely enjoyment of the recital was interrupted by hasty questions, followed by general discomfiture. During the week no fewer than five of them had christened the same gypsy child, their wives and daughters had all been its sponsors, and had given clothing to mother and child, and several had given money in addition. The calibre of the mother may be gauged from her having told the same tale to each one of them, and given herself a name that was simply unforgettable. The child was two years of age, and
probably it had already far out-distanced the French baby who was baptized nineteen times by the Reformed Church, which gave most to the mother, and twenty-one times by Roman Catholics, who gave most to the infant.

No one can work among the lowest classes and make their path even practicably smooth without bribery of some kind, but there is no excuse for that which leads to religious hypocrisy, and it is peculiarly offensive to the poor when they are keen enough to detect it. A girl of sixteen, a native of the Old Kent Road, told me one day with regretful remembrance of a club that she and her friends had used to attend. 'It was a lady who come and started it. We went once a week for fancy sewing and a Bible-class, and once for games and dancing. My! we did enjoy it. One night there was a thunderstorm, and the lady never knew nothing about it till the next morning, when she read it in the paper. Me and Lyddy and four or five others went to church and Sunday-school as well. We always had went, ever since we was tiny mites, but there was a lot that didn't. And then the vicar said the club was only to be for girls who went to church reg'lar. And the lady said, "No, let any girls come who'll beyave theirselves while they're there, and when I've taught 'em and brought 'em on a little, they'll go to church of their own accord. Anything's better than hypocrytes." But the vicar couldn't see it, and the lady had to go away. And then there was no club whether you went to church or whether you didn't. We did miss her.' 'Do you think many girls would have gone to church for the sake of the club?' I asked. 'Oh, yes, miss; there's girls who'd do anything. And some who was willing to go to church either way wouldn't ha' went just so
as not to be mixed up with 'em. Ladies don't always understand, but she did. Mother and all said how feeling she was.' Long afterwards, when she was a married woman of some years' standing, but seemed—if changed at all—slightly younger than in her precocious girlhood, she told me, 'Clergymen didn't always ought to be among pore people. They get so masterful no one can't work with 'em. They drive all the ladies and gentlemen away, and then they get half mad trying to do everything theirselves. Why, I've known our vicar strike the choir-boys in church, and several times, when the people hadn't joined in where they 'd ought to, he 's begun again and made them. Once, when the percession didn't go right because there was extra chairs brought in, he stamped his foot so that you could hear it above the orgin. And yet we shouldn't never have had no church at all down our way if it hadn't a been for him. He got so as he couldn't bear for any one to seem to go against him about anything, and then at last the bishop said it was his nerves wore out, and he must go away to a country place. And then the new vicar had to begin all over again because there wasn't nothing left except the church, and no one didn't like the church half as well as they did the little mission hall that come first.'

It would often surprise clergymen if they knew with how much interest any disputes among themselves are followed by their flocks. A lady at a mothers' meeting was reading Mrs. Oliphant's Curate in Charge, and was astonished to find how successfully this mild romance stemmed the undercurrent of gossip, every woman listening with rapt attention. Afterwards she learnt that each incident in the book was made apply to the new vicar, who had closed an iron
church in the poorer part of his parish, declaring it to be no longer necessary, and had dismissed the middle-aged curate who had conducted the services. The poor have a strong preference for a small church, and except as an occasional and very great effort, never willingly attend a large one.

The question to be asked most earnestly when originating any charitable institution is, What will the poor learn from it? In many parishes, distressed by the lack of sufficient bedding, kind-hearted persons form a society for the free loan of blankets during the winter months. What is the lesson indelibly impressed upon their clients and all their clients’ acquaintances? That blankets no longer form a part of the necessaries of life which must be obtained out of weekly wages; that when they wear thin, or become insufficient for their growing family, there is no need to renew them, or to increase their number, and that they are the first things, instead of almost the last, that should be pawned in the regularly recurring periods of unemployment. As a natural result, the local dearth of blankets becomes more and more intense, and the founders of the club, instead of reconsidering and revising their methods, appeal to a wider public ‘to meet’ (no, ‘cope with’ is the usual expression—it sounds more strenuous) ‘the growing distress of the district.’ If the club gave boots or floor-covering the results would be the same; whatever articles the charitable organisations of the neighbourhood are ready to supply or replace will be parted with at the lightest touch of ill fortune. The usual plea is that the bedding, etc., were pawned ‘to get bread for the children,’ but in many instances bread took the form of spiced beef or ham and eggs.
Not long since a poor friend of mine went to spend the day with a still poorer friend of hers. She partly overheard a hurried consultation on the subject of dinner, and then saw one of the boys roll up his mother’s heavy winter coat, whispering ‘I dare say I’ll get 3s. 6d. on it!’ My friend had the courage to interfere. ‘There is plenty of bread and cheese and tea in the house, surely we can make our dinner off that for once? In another month’s time we shall be having bitter weather, and how can your mother afford to buy a coat?’ ‘Oh,’ contemptuously, ‘mother didn’t buy the old thing! It was given to her.’ The frequency with which the family had received gifts of clothing was further suggested by another incident which occurred during my friend’s visit. When she arrived she was carrying a large cardboard box, and to prevent the children from interfering with it the mother had pushed it under an easy-chair. A little girl, too young to speak plainly, laboriously hauled it out, and then, pretending to read the label, announced with solemn satisfaction, ‘At sees toes.’ (That says clothes.)

Unless encouraged to do it, and imagining that in some obscure way they are flattering the prejudices of their hearers, I have rarely known working-class parents complain of the number of their children, or regard them as a burden, but an acquaintance of mine recently heard a woman blessed with a large and healthy family make the ghastly complaint that she ‘had had no churchyard luck.’ Once, when there was a sudden irruption of two noisy little girls into an already overflowing kitchen, and I said, with amiable intent, ‘Ah, I have not seen these two little ones before,’ the father replied sullenly, ‘And I wish I
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hadn't neither!' But I think he must have been engaged in what children call 'showing off,' for certainly no little girls would have burst with such a joyous and confident air into a presence where they were habitually unwelcome.

Mothers have not yet learned the modern doctrine that large families are a satisfaction to their 'betters,' and are somewhat shy of mentioning any number higher than 'six living.' One poor woman, who had to give evidence in a police-court, was asked by the opposing solicitor how many children she had, a decidedly irrelevant question, and when she faintly whispered 'seven,' repeated 'Seven!' in such profoundly contemptuous tones that she nearly broke down in her perfectly truthful evidence, and for many days after she complained, 'He did make me feel ashamed. "Seven!" he says. I don't know what I should ha' done if I 'd had to own they was all girls. Not that I likes 'em any the worse for that. My brother has eleven children, and only one girl among the lot. That 's something to complain of, if you like!' The love for very young children is quite as marked in men as in women, and often the one safe shelter that can be found for an illegitimate child is in the home of a middle-aged couple whose own youngest child has grown beyond the unconscious flattery of helplessness. In one house where there was an unaccounted-for but much petted girl of five, I was told privately, 'We 've had her from a baby. Her mother married last autumn and would have taken her, but my husband wouldn't let her go. He thinks all the world of her. You see, Tom 's nearly eleven, and school takes up most of his day, and in the evening he wants to be out 'long of the others.'
Human hearts are a little less hard than they used to be: there was a time when nothing short of a belief in the eternal loss of the heathen could induce the Christian to do aught for him, but now a report of his temporal sufferings will bring in liberal subscriptions. When Robinson Crusoe sold into slavery the negro who had saved his life, he felt some faint qualms of conscience, but deadened them by engaging the planter to release him after ten years, and to instruct him in the principles of Christianity! Defoe was a vigorous pamphleteer, but I doubt if in any of his political tracts he ever gave utterance to more bitter satire. Many years later a popular religious poet declared that to abolish slavery was to 'shut the gates of mercy on mankind.'

Nevertheless, the appeals issued up to the present moment by numberless charitable societies are sufficient to prove the hardness of our hearts—and perhaps do something to further their induration. They rarely give details of any but the most exceptional cases of want and misery, or mention the excellent but unsensational work for which some of them could well claim credit. The composition of these documents usually resembles the style of a certain Frenchman who 'always wrote at the top of his voice.'

The chairman of a society, intended for the relief of the temporary distress of respectable members of the professional classes, told me that he had the greatest difficulty in preventing all the funds from being allotted to persons who had fallen below the point at which, in his opinion, it was possible for the committee to give them any real assistance. 'Clergymen write and tell us,' he declared angrily, 'that my brother-officer's widow is lying in a cellar on a heap of
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rags. Well, if she is, the sooner they move her to the workhouse infirmary the better. What possible use could five pounds be to her? But five pounds will be of very great use to the widow in bad health who is living in a five-roomed cottage with her daughter, a daily governess, and whose eldest son has just accepted a beast of an appointment, so that he will have little to spare for her and the children, and who taught her two small boys so thoroughly well that they have won scholarships that almost support them.' He generally had his own way, but owed his success more to the soundness of his lungs than to the soundness of his principles; nearly all his colleagues would have preferred dribbling out money to enable the widow to continue living in the cellar.

Few things are more difficult than to make charitable people realise that help is not help unless it is adequate to the needs of the persons in question. The doling out of uncertain shillings is like sprinkling a flower-bed at short intervals—with the result that the plants turn their roots upwards to meet this scanty moisture, instead of sending them downwards in search of supplies which will make them independent of the gardener.

The same person who was trying to spread a knowledge of thrift, and whose efforts were referred to in the first chapter, came across a family where the father, a most respectable man, had died suddenly, leaving a family, the eldest of which by several years was a pupil-teacher of seventeen, earning a very minute salary. The father had done his best to save money, but his investments had been disastrous, and the securities were practically worthless. After ascertaining this and many other details of the case he
applied to various societies and individuals, and found them exasperatingly willing to give shillings and half-crowns. At last he went to the vicar and wardens of a popular church and said, 'Look here, you are always dribbling away money, and you no more know what becomes of it than of pins and postage stamps. Now give me a whole collection for a single object and see what I'll do with it. If we look after this girl until she is a full-blown schoolmistress the whole family will need no further assistance. If she has to give in and go to service she will only be able to support herself, and all that has been spent on her for the last three years will be wasted. If we leave her to struggle through her examinations alone you will find her in an asylum from overstrain. Come, when shall it be? This Sunday or next?'

They laughed and protested, but ultimately handed him eleven pounds; with this, and seventeen that he raised from other sources, and regular temporary help in food and clothing provided by ladies whom he interested in the case, the undertaking was safely accomplished and in the shortest possible time.

People forget that the more they exaggerate the more they must. I once remonstrated with a doctor for the way in which he had frightened a simple-minded patient who had interpreted his warnings literally, and was carrying out his advice with most undesirable results. 'The truth is,' he said apologetically, 'people believe so little that we tell them that we get into the habit of putting things rather too strongly.' Which was effect and which cause will probably be decided according to professional bias.

As Selden said in his Table Talk, 'If a physician sees you eat anything that is not good for your body,
to keep you from it he cries 'tis poison. If the divine sees you do anything that is hurtful for your soul, to keep you from it he cries you are damned. To preach long, loud, and damnation is the way to be cried up. We love a man that damnns us, and we run after him again to save us. If a man had a sore leg, and he should go to an honest, judicious surgeon, and he should only bid him keep it warm, and anoint it with such an oil (an oil well known) that would do the cure, haply he would not much regard him, because he knew the medicine beforehand, an ordinary medicine. But if he should go to a surgeon that should tell him, Your leg will gangrene within three days, and it must be cut off, and you will die, unless you do something that I could tell you; what listening there would be to this man! Oh, for the Lord’s sake, tell me what this is. I will give you any content for your pains.’

Venture to remind the charitable public that wholesome family life is the foundation of wholesome social life, and that laziness and short-sightedness are very ordinary failings of human nature, and can only be corrected by the natural discipline of family responsibilities, and they turn away contemptuously from this ‘oil well known’ and ask you for ‘a constructive policy.’ A constructive policy, apparently, is above human nature and entirely unhampered by its weaknesses, and yet it is to be drawn up by human beings and carried out by them. It is about as reasonable a quest as the Rosicrucian’s search for a universal solvent—forgetting that no vessel could contain it. As I read in a recently translated Norwegian novel, nowadays no one wishes to bear anything or to expiate anything; we cannot have toothache without making it a social question.
VI

THE STANDARD OF COMFORT

The standard of domestic comfort is decidedly lower in the country than in the town. 'Is your father comfortable in the almshouse?' I asked a very respectable, hard-working villager. 'Well, he'd ought to be, miss. He has a boarded floor!' Even in the poorest town-houses these are so generally supplied that I had long ceased to regard them as a luxury, or even a comfort, and had, indeed, felt much dissatisfied if my patients could not manage to cover them with linoleum in order to save themselves the labour of scrubbing, and the unwholesome odour of damp wood and of the wet dust in the cracks and unevennesses which no brush could reach, but her remark brought back a remembrance of Sunday afternoon visits paid thirty years ago in a Norfolk village. The most prosperous period of farming in that county was already over, but the cottages must have dated from its palmiest days. One of them was inhabited by two elderly women, a widow and a spinster. The ground floor consisted of a single, rather large room with an earthen floor as uneven as the worst of country lanes. There was a great cavern of a chimney, and in a small rusty grate a handful of sticks was smouldering. The walls had at one time been yellow-washed, but were so stained and broken that few traces of
colour remained. There were no pictures and no ornaments, except two spotted dogs on the mantel-shelf. The furniture consisted of three wooden chairs without cushions and a small bare table. The two women sat upright in front of the fireplace, with grimy, knotted hands resting on their knees; their short skirts were frayed and weather-stained, and muddy men's boots were on their feet. They both complained of rheumatism, of the difficulty of getting enough work, and of the approaching shadow of the dreaded 'House.' I was told afterwards that they worked at weeding and stoning for a farmer at 8d. a day. He entirely disapproved of all field labour for women, but made an exception in their favour because they had been brought up to it and could do nothing else. My informant would occasionally have given them 10d. a day and their tea for feather-cutting, but their hands were too clumsy to manage a pair of scissors with sufficient rapidity.

The next cottage was inhabited by a widow living chiefly on 'out relief.' It had been her home all through her married life, and, comparatively speaking, it was comfortable. The walls were papered, there were a few mats on the damp brick floor, and there was a large Windsor chair with a couple of cushions. The walls were adorned with coloured pictures which puzzled me at the time, but which I now believe were scenes from Pamela. On either side of the fireplace were large cupboards. 'What splendid cupboards you have,' said my guide cheerfully. 'I 've nothin' to put in 'em,' was the prompt reply. She also was dreading the 'House'; she had become incapable of gardening, and it was practically impossible to live on half-a-crown a week and pay eighteenpence in rent.
London, 'up north,' and America had drawn her family away one by one, and she did not appear to know whether they were living or dead.

In a third cottage I paid many visits. The husband had been crippled by rheumatism for fifteen years, but was in receipt of a pension from a Friendly Society, and the only unmarried son lived at home. The kitchen, with a small outhouse attached, was comfortable except for the bad lighting, which made it necessary to sit with the door open. The one bedroom was extremely small, with no fireplace, and so low that even a child could only stand upright in the central strip, which was about two feet wide.

Not far off we found a mother with her two days' old baby (her fourth child) lying in the brick-floor kitchen on an improvised bed. There were two small bedrooms upstairs, but neither of them had any fireplace, and the only means of access to them was by a nearly perpendicular ladder. Even at the present day balusters and handrails are almost unknown in the poorest class of dwellings, whether in town or country, and to this fact a large number of serious domestic accidents are due. Comparatively careful householders drive in a few staples and fix a rope.

The ordinary wages in that village were about fourteen shillings a week, and the rent (usually in arrears) seldom amounted to more than two shillings, and the gardens were a fair size. A lump sum was received for the three or four harvest weeks, and in most cases was taken immediately to the village shop to settle back debts. Families were large and the death-rate low, and there was little paid work either for women or children.

Another cottage, of which I have a clear recollection,
was occupied by a kind of bailiff who received £1 a week and his breakfast. The kitchen was large and comfortable, but there were only two small bedrooms for a family composed of twelve persons, the youngest being five or six years of age.

In my opinion, one of the most satisfactory features of country life at the present moment is that one can scarcely find a village where some of the worst houses standing are not left uninhabited, and where still worse ones have not fallen into ruins, or been converted into cowsheds and stables; while there are few villages which do not contain some recently built houses which, however they may fail in detail, are at least designed with some respect for decency and sanitation. When villages were over-crowded, and houseroom was difficult to obtain, it is impossible for town-dwellers to imagine the miserable state of repair in which many dwellings were allowed to remain from year's end to year's end. An elderly acquaintance of mine living in a London suburb drew a small income from cottage property, most of which he had never seen, as he had inherited it unexpectedly from a very distant relative. After some years he chanced to be in the neighbourhood where most of it was situated, and his agent took the opportunity of asking him to look at a small cottage adjoining a larger one, and asking him what he wished done with it, as in its present state and under the altered local conditions it could no longer find a tenant. After doing so, his orders to the agent were, 'Make an opening in the wall, and tell the next-door people that they can use it for a coalhouse if they choose. I am ashamed to think I ever drew rent from such a dog's hole. It has never been fit for a human habitation.'
Can it be wondered at if the sons and grandsons of people living in such circumstances have little fear or disgust at the overcrowding of the towns into which they have migrated, and are slow in raising their standard of decency and comfort? Even in time of illness lack of air and space, quiet and privacy, seem to weigh little upon them. A friend of mine had a young housemaid whose parents (both of whom were in a bad state of health) lived in a crowded district of London, and whose grandparents had been Northamptonshire labourers. One day the girl told her that her third sister, aged twelve, was dangerously ill with pneumonia, and that the doctor thought very badly of the case. My friend, knowing that they had no relatives who could assist them, and that father, mother, and four children were living in three small, over-furnished rooms, one of which was always locked up, invited the two youngest, a boy of seven and a girl of nine, to come to her house for a fortnight, and their sister fetched them by the next train. ‘I suppose they were pleased to come, Mary?’ she said, hardly intending it as a question, for there could be no doubt in her mind that the children were delighted with the change to her roomy house and large garden. The girl hesitated. ‘Perhaps they are a little shy, as they have never been away from home before?’ ‘It isn’t that, m’m. They’d have liked coming right enough, if it hadn’t a-been for losing the party.’ ‘The party?’ ‘Alice’s birthday party. It’s to be to-morrow.’ Alice was the sick child whose life my friend had hoped to save by leaving her ‘room to breathe’! It was almost impossible to cure her of her impulsive kindness, however, for the following summer she sent another of the children into the
country for a month, where she was taken care of at a farmhouse by an old servant who did her utmost to amuse and occupy the child and supply her with playfellows. 'Is Katie enjoying her holiday, Mary?' my friend asked at the end of the third week. 'She says she'll be glad when her month is up, m'm,' was the sole reply, and all the thanks she ever received. But one must remember that appreciation of kindness is often dormant, not non-existent; when it awakes the fruit of a good deed may be enjoyed by some one who needs it far more than the doer. That housemaid never gave her employers any but grudging service, and yet as a married woman she is a blessing to her neighbours.

Although I have never come across the 'heap of rags' so dear to fiction, the beds in working-class homes have few virtues but cleanliness, and as a rule are only fit for persons in the strongest health. As soon as there is serious illness the improvement of the beds becomes a pressing problem. To begin with, they are rarely single, and therefore it is almost impossible to secure that a bed shall be occupied by the invalid alone. I remember one instance where a child of nine habitually slept with her grandmother who was dying of cancer, although there was no lack of space (three adults and three children in a six-roomed house), nor was there any serious lack of means. There was simply no standard of comfort; the man and his wife had grown up in crowded homes, and their ideas had not expanded with their later opportunities. The human mind varies in this respect as in all others. I know a man of about fifty-five, who was one of eleven children (nine surviving) brought up in a cottage with a single, fireless bedroom.
Throughout nearly the whole of his married life he has occupied the best cottage in the parish, and if there were a better one he would take it immediately. Several neighbours have prospered to the same degree, but they are perfectly contented with the class of dwelling in which they were brought up, although in two instances they have built—for pleasure, not profit—greenhouses of the very newest type.

Many of the poor when provided with conveniences are at first utterly unable to make use of them. They remind me of an old Irish lady who, some seventy years ago, was shown a pair of silver candle-snuffers for the first time. 'Sure, 'tis an elegant little box,' she exclaimed, then snuffed the candle with her moistened finger and thumb, and carefully put the piece of blackened wick inside the snuffers.

But, after all, what high degree of susceptibility to discomfort would be compatible with getting the world's work done, even under modern conditions? And in the days when machinery was comparatively scarce, the circumstances of labour were far harder. A countryman of eighty-seven was speaking to me of the way in which elevators, etc., had reduced the pitiless toil of the agricultural labourer. 'Pitching hay and stacking it—ah!—you can't imagine what stacking hay was like on a hot day. There you stood by the hour, the sun blazing down on you, and your shirt and your socks and your lungs all full of prickles.' 'Was beer any use?' He smiled. 'Well, it was and it wasn't. If you could get just enough it certainly helped, but that was always a ticklish job. Most of the men stick to tea nowadays, and I dare say it's better on the whole.'

It has truly been said that we pity the poor strictly
in proportion to the amount of dirt by which they are surrounded. If we pitied them in proportion to the smallness of their opportunities of cleanliness, and the greatness of the efforts they have to make in order to secure it, much of our pity would be diverted from the town to the country. I have read portions of Acts of Parliament relating to the supply of water in rural districts—a most instructive exercise when combined with a knowledge of village life. Comparatively speaking, the poetry and fiction in which brooks, wells, streams, rills, rivulets and springs abound, cool and clear even in the hottest summer, are less exasperating because less detailed and precise in their statements. There are few villages which do not endure a scarcity of water for at least two months in the year; there are many which experience it for six, and even nine. The worst that can befall town-dwellers is that they should have to carry water up two or three flights of stairs; country people think little of carrying it a quarter of a mile, or of drinking tea made with rain water that has been standing three weeks in an open cask, or taken from a ditch or pond to which cattle have access. I have known water used for cooking and drinking when it smelled so strongly that the same persons could not endure using it to wash the kitchen floor. Almost the first question one asks a cottage patient is, ‘Where do you get water?’ and a frequent reply is, ‘We take it from the roadside in the winter, and in the summer they let us have it at the farm, but it’s a dreadful long way to send, and the pump’s out of order this year.’ ‘And where is the pump?’ ‘At the side of the farmyard. They pump it into a big trough for the cattle. If you don’t keep a look-out, the children
dip the can into the trough instead of getting it fresh.'

It is nothing unusual for cottage women in dry seasons to be obliged to give up washing clothes for weeks at a stretch, and to stint their children even of drinking water. I remember being told in one house, where I am sure that cleanliness was practised as far as it was humanly possible, 'Mother keeps a few spoonfuls of water to wash the baby every day, but it's three weeks since the others had a bath. Mother always has her eye on the clouds. She thinks there'll be a nice drop of water to-night, and then she'll be able to set to work the first thing to-morrow. She's fair sick of dirt, but she can't carry water herself, and this time of the year father can't manage to fetch more than a couple of pailfuls, and he can't do that every day. It takes him a good half-hour.' In one village where I spent a considerable amount of time, to offer any one a few buckets of rain water was the only form of charity expected from better-class tenants, and all the more energetic among the labourers would gladly come a quarter of a mile to fetch it for their wives, even if they were unable to do it until ten o'clock at night. In the height of the summer I have often had water fetched from my house by the light of a lantern, and many people who would not condescend to ask for the privilege used to come and help themselves in the dark. This kind of thing is so much a matter of course in the country that my dog had to be kept indoors at night lest he should raise any objection.

Considering all the circumstances of their lives it is the cleanliness of the poor which surprises me, and not their dirt—their cleanliness of person as well as
surroundings. Working in the surgical ward of a London hospital I must own that at first I was astonished at the griminess of the men when carried in as the victims of street or trade accidents, but I soon observed that their condition varied according to the day of the week. Mondays they were almost clean, Wednesdays tolerably so, while Saturdays they were at their blackest. In the north of England this experience must vary slightly, for I discovered in district work that my visits to any house with a 'master' were always unwelcome between six and eight on Friday evening, and the children were usually in the street or on the stairs. There was great reticence as to the reason, and as Friday was pay-day I thought the man was probably not quite himself; still, I knew that payments were fortnightly, and that not even the most indulged husband was expected to be drunk on the 'off' day. (Poor women have numberless euphemisms for drunkenness, but 'an unquenchable spark in his throat,' is considered among the most elegant.) I ultimately learnt that this was the time when the men bathed and put on their clean underclothing—which was not removed until the following week. Owing to the Saturday half-holiday Friday has now become the usual day for house-cleaning all over England. This general turn-out seems a fatiguing and comfortless plan, but when I commented on it once to a young servant she very convincingly replied, 'Mother has to do it. Poor people can't afford to do cleaning every day; it would take more hot water, more soap, more everything.'

Sometimes, however, the older men were appallingly dirty, even in London. I recollect telling one nurse, a clergyman's daughter, to wash a newly arrived
patient's feet, and found her a few minutes later in a fainting condition. Another stronger-nerved person replied cheerfully when I remarked that her patient did not look very clean, 'I've taken sixteen basins of water to him and turpentine rags, Sister. I must take a few more.'

Strangely enough, the dirt or cleanliness of a house gives one no certain clue as to the personal condition of the inhabitants. In wretched, filthy dwellings I have found clean patients, and some of the blackest I have ever seen were in well-built, well-furnished houses, where every object but the owners was scoured and polished to the highest degree of brilliancy. I have even known a woman who was perfectly clean and tidy herself, but whose children were in such a state that she was prosecuted for neglect. She was a person of consistent life: nothing would have induced her to be seen abroad until she had been churched, but she never took the trouble to have the children baptized!

I am told that the second of these anomalies is constantly found in Holland, and that it is an unfailling source of astonishment to Dutch ladies to find that it is possible to travel third-class in England without unpleasant results. I knew an old English officer, however, who, although he professed anxiety to make every possible economy, denied the possibility of travelling third-class. He had tried it once, and once was enough; he had travelled with two chimney-sweeps, and the men had fought and belaboured one another with their soot bags. Nothing would induce him to believe that he might travel for fifty years continuously without meeting with a similar experience.
The unprogressive poor are simply oblivious of most of the discomforts by which they are surrounded, and when any accident occurs which intensifies these discomforts they are exceedingly slow in repairing the damage, even when the means of doing so are well within their power. In a cottage where nothing was grudged on food or clothes or amusement, a missing pane of glass was replaced with brown paper for four years, although it was in the only living room, which was already excessively dark. In an adjoining house several tiles were blown off the roof and lay in the garden unbroken for two years, when they disappeared. At the end of six years the roof was still unmended, although the parents considered themselves well enough off to keep two girls of sixteen and eighteen at home and idle for eight months out of the twelve.

As it is always the old who seem most insensitive to discomfort and most unwilling to take any trouble to avert the risk of dangerous accidents, some change is probably taking place in these respects, but it comes very slowly. I know plenty of young and middle-aged men who have not the proper outfit for the work that they are invariably called on to perform at certain seasons of the year, who are frequently ill for want of it, and yet have sufficient wages to enable them to make the purchase without difficulty if they chose. There is a general belief that the old are cautious and far-sighted, but caution arises far more certainly from early training or from brain power than from unexplained personal experiences. If you note a young, a middle-aged, and an old man breaking stones on the road, the first generally wears eye-protectors, the second may or may not do so, while the third is almost
invariably without them. The same thing is true of townsmen engaged in 'roughing' kerbstones after they are set in place. Not long ago I employed a countryman of seventy-six to train some creepers. A lad was provided to hold the ladder, but wandered away to do something more exciting. I found that the old man's method of shifting the ladder was to jerk it along the wall while he stood on the sixth or seventh rung! I declined further service of the kind until I had taken out an insurance to cover the risk of casual labour. The much-complained-of unwillingness to employ men above fifty years of age has probably more to do with conduct of this type than their reduced working powers, and such recklessness dates from a time when life and limb were less valued by their possessors than they are now. Fears have frequently been expressed that claim to compensation will cause an extraordinary increase of accidents, but the growing susceptibility to pain would alone more than balance the temptation.

It is always most pitiful to hear of elderly men dismissed on account of age, and young men dismissed because they are no longer boys, but in the cases where it has been possible for me to inquire into all the circumstances, I have rarely found that employers were either ungrateful to the older men or blind to the merits of the younger ones. If they were dismissed it was for valid reasons. In the exceptional cases the employers were poor and struggling men themselves. At the present day it is not the prosperous who try to grind the face of the poor, but the relatively unsuccessful, and these, of course, have the worst choice of workmen. One must always be on guard against the pathetic fallacy, for it is constantly
exploited by the least satisfactory types of men and women, and is revelled in by the young. I once reproached a fine healthy girl of nineteen for her almost entire ignorance of all domestic work, and she protested tearfully, 'I 'ad to leave school before I was turned thirteen, and then for four years I was runnin' about in a brickfield. You don't learn much there.' Certainly not; but I learnt afterwards that these four years had been spent as nursemaid to the children of the owner, and if she and her charges had passed any part of their time in the brickfield it was strictly against orders and not for want of a more suitable playground. In all classes there is a tendency to attribute other people's success to their bad qualities, and personal failure to superior virtue or ill-luck, but it is especially rife among the half-educated. Men and women who tell you, on the strength of a two minutes' acquaintance, that they 'have never had half a chance'—with the delicate implication that the first gleam of light was your appearance on the scene—are invariably rogues.

A very large proportion of the persons who will be making this plea in a few years' time, will simply be suffering from the over-indulgence which allows them to waste every 'chance' that presents itself. What the children do or do not 'take to' is the standard by which all things are to be measured. Eighteen months ago a mother came to tell me that her son, a bad-tempered, shirking lad of seventeen, had been offered a situation with a young doctor who kept a motor-car, and would teach him to drive and look after it. The lad had already been twelve weeks out of work, and I said, 'What an excellent opportunity for him! As time goes on, there will probably be less and less
occupation for grooms.' 'But he don't seem to take to it, miss.' 'Then he had better turn his mind to gardening. As long as he lives one or two groom-gardeners will be wanted in every village.' 'He don't like gardenin'. He's all for horses.' I did not remind her that he had lost his last situation for robbing and ill-treating a young cob; I merely suggested that he was rather old to begin work in a large establishment, but that he might possibly get a berth in one about four miles away. 'Oh, but they wouldn't give him not what he was havin' at B—, and the boys there has to rough it something shameful. They're often a mile away from the stables by six in the morning.' 'Then he had better try farm work. I know two or three of the large farmers who are short-handed.' 'Oh, I don't want none of my boys to come to that, and he wouldn't like it neither. The hours is so long.' Six months later he was still out of work. How much longer his mother and stepfather continued to support him I do not know, as I left the neighbourhood. They had five or six acres of land, and small holdings tend to irregularity of employment, because conferring a certain amount of independence without raising the standard of life, so that the lazy members of the family have neither outward compulsion nor inward incentive to steady exertion.

The standard of comfort with regard to dress has risen perceptibly. Fifteen years ago, even in homes where the wages ranged from thirty shillings to fifty shillings, and the rent rarely exceeded seven shillings, boots and shoes specially intended for indoor use were almost unknown. There was nothing to put upon the feet of a convalescent, who had perhaps been ten or twelve weeks in bed, except hard, heavy, misshapen
THE STANDARD OF COMFORT

leather boots, and nothing for her to wear but an old skirt and a dingy shawl. If the invalid had fallen into a nervous state she generally looked on the boots with horror, and often made them an excuse for not rising, but the idea of buying a pair of slippers never entered her head, and could not easily be implanted. At the present moment soft house boots and shoes have a large sale in all but the very poorest districts, and dressing-gowns are by no means uncommon possessions. I recently offered presents to four children whose mother had shown extreme kindness and generosity to some unhappy little neighbours, and the eldest, a girl of fourteen, surprised me by her prompt choice of a pair of bedroom slippers.

I know one set of model buildings in London where the children are compelled to put on felt slippers as soon as they come indoors. The mothers regard it half as a social distinction, half as a foolish fad, but some of them are beginning to recognise that it means economy as well as health for the children and comparative quietude for the 'underneaths.' 'The destruction of the poor is his poverty'; for want of a second pair of everyday boots in rainy weather the children either ruin them by drying them in front of the fire, or injure their health by wearing them damp.

The poor derive an enormous amount of pleasure from their clothes, and it is almost as generally and intensely felt by young men as by young women. Much reprobation of this 'widespread love of finery is expressed by the upper classes. Part, at any rate, of the expenditure is to be regretted, because it would be more wisely expended on wholesome food, or saved for a rainy day; but the constant suggestion that
finery covers rags has little foundation, as the quality and amount of underwear steadily improves.

There is such a thing as a natural gift for orderliness and thrift, and it shows itself in as unexpected quarters as a talent for music or mathematics. I knew a London girl who when she went to service at the age of fifteen had never worn gloves, or a collar, or possessed even a fractional interest in an umbrella. Her wardrobe was tied up in a single paper parcel so light in weight that a yard of frayed twine held it together, and she did not own a box or bag of any description. Within two years she jingled a bunch of keys and had an account at the savings-bank. At twenty-two she married with a trousseau that filled three trunks, all her house-linen, and a nest-egg of seventeen pounds. At twenty-six, when her husband had rather less than thirty shillings a week, her house was what the neighbours called 'a perfect picture.'

This young woman had a friend who came from a home greatly superior to hers, and remained in service until she was twenty-four, when she married, 'with nothing to her name' but a tawdry, ill-fitting wedding-dress, and even that had been bought with money sent four thousand miles by a former mistress, together with a letter kindly bidding her spend it 'on a comfortable armchair for your pretty little sitting-room.' The husband, who was nearly thirty, had not saved a farthing, and they had to go into furnished lodgings. By the time the baby came the man was out of work, and although it was for the first time, and did not last more than six weeks, it would have been a case of starvation or the workhouse if the ant had not come to the rescue of the grasshoppers. Working-class ants are generally too scrupulously delicate to lecture
those whom they feed, but this was a peculiarly strong-minded specimen, and she soon had them camping out in a single room, bare except for the bed that she lent them, and engaged in 'getting together a few sticks of furniture' with the money saved on the difference in rent. As a result, matters look far more hopeful for the moderately repentant grasshoppers than they did a year ago, and it is possible that, badly checked as they are by their false start, they may yet become the possessors of a comfortable home and of that small amount of capital without which it must always be at the mercy of every gust of adverse fortune.

A recent writer has poured contempt upon the general ambition of women to have a passage entrance and a front garden. He traces it to decadent feudalism and rampant snobbishness, but if he had ever tried nursing a sick child in a room which opened directly on the street he would learn that their desires have a simpler origin. Even if there are good bedrooms, nearly every child under twelve has to be nursed in the living-room because the children of the poor are so unaccustomed to solitude that they cannot endure to remain for ten minutes alone, although all the stir of housework plainly reaches every corner of the dwelling. The meanest fore-court makes an incalculable difference in the amount of noise and dust that passes through the windows, and for want of one many of my patients and their friends are simply compelled to live in the back of the house, however ill-lighted and otherwise undesirable it may be.

Those who so constantly declaim against the closed bedroom windows of the poor have equally little knowledge of the practical difficulties of their lives.
In tens of thousands of small houses these windows are scrupulously left open from daylight till dark, and then as scrupulously fastened. Why? In a bedroom measuring some $10' \times 9' \times 8'$, four adults or five or six children have to sleep, and how can all the beds be placed out of reach of icy draughts, fog, and rain squalls? Even in fine weather there are often other unfavourable conditions to be combated. Some shut their windows to keep their children's ears free from the pollution of vile language, and others do it to shut out odours which seem more poisonous than over-breathed air. In a house where the tenants did everything that was practicable to keep the rooms fresh and sweet, I have literally swept the flies from a sick woman's bed with a dustpan and brush, and many patients too weak to defend themselves knew no rest until we had made mosquito curtains. This plague arose from acres of undrained land covered with thousands of tons of household refuse. One toy destructor worked on the edge of the festering heaps, while the city fathers squabbled over a costly statue in the market-place.

Where there are sash windows ventilation is easier, but to find these, and still less to find them in working order, is by no means the general rule. Even in their best days the sash windows provided in working-class homes open either at the top or at the bottom, but rarely in both directions. What are called 'cottage windows' seem specially designed to let in the rain, and to break if the wind should rise while they are open, and I have found not a few rooms still in use where the window consists of one fixed pane of glass.

Domestic architecture is everywhere unpractical and haphazard, but no one suffers as much from this
as the decent wage-earners. Unfortunately a large proportion of those professedly interested in the better housing of the poor are more concerned in realising their frivolous ideals of beauty than in seriously planning domestic health and comfort. No object can be beautiful which utterly fails to meet the ends for which it was designed, and the modern Gothic cottage is neither cool in summer nor warm in winter, and does not possess a single good room upstairs or down. Not long since a very pretentious one was being built as an additional lodge for an old country mansion. The practical man in charge of the work went to the owner and told him that if the house were completed according to the plans furnished it would be impossible to make the fires 'draw,' and earnestly begged permission to alter the chimneys both in design and position. His heart was in his work, and he urged the point almost beyond the bounds of prudence, but the only reply he received was, 'It would spoil the appearance.'
VII

THE POSITION OF THE WIFE IN THE WORKING-CLASS HOME

The position of the wife in the working-class home varies from a lot far worse than that of the ordinary domestic slave to that of a woman who is the absolute ruler in everything that concerns herself, her children, and her house, and in nine-tenths of the matters that concern her husband; and her place in the scale is determined far more by her intellect than by her physical strength or the practice of the tamer virtues, or by the original views of the man as to their respective rights and duties. When physical strength is above the average, either in man or woman, it is generally squandered uselessly or injuriously, while the smallest superiority in intellect will make a favourable difference in the entire life and environment of the family.

The fact that sons and daughters alike depend almost solely upon their mother's opinion when in any difficulty makes her ability to advise them of the utmost importance. The advice given by some mothers, especially by those who have never been in service, is often enough to account for their daughters' failure to retain any situation worth having. "What is your Christian name?" asked a lady who had just engaged a young girl as between-maid. "Emily." "That is rather inconvenient, as it happens to be my
own name. I must call you by your surname.' The girl made no reply at the time, but on taking up her duties she said, in sullenly aggressive tones, 'I told mother what you said about calling me Stephens.' 'And what did your mother say?' 'She said, "Don't answer her, then!"'

If a boy by some fault loses a situation he wishes to keep, it is always the mother who must try and soften the employer's heart by promises of amendment. If he wearies of the one he has, and sets his mind on another, it is she who must try and obtain it for him. The lad who has never left his mother, never been away from her for two days in his life, at seventeen or eighteen is still childishly dependent on her. I know a hard-working young fellow of that age whom not even the vague glories of a trip to London will tempt from his home. In the evening 'he always sits on mother's side of the fire.' He was supposed to do this merely from habit, as the parents had been sixteen years in the same cottage, but a few weeks ago they changed houses, and to the secret amusement of his father and sisters it was observed that he at once took up the same position. In numerous cases this almost boundless influence is badly used because the mothers have not brains enough to perceive what is really for their sons' interest.

As an example of the complicated domestic problems that women are called on to solve, and on the solution of which the whole welfare of the family depends, the following instance will suffice. A mother of forty-three, with a husband somewhat younger, had a family consisting of a lad of eighteen, a girl of sixteen in service, two boys of thirteen and seven, and girls of eleven and twelve at school. Her health decidedly
and definitely failed; it was evident that she could no longer do the work she had been doing, and it was probable that she would never be able to do it again. The husband was a steady, hard-working man, 'on the go' from five-thirty A.M. to nine-thirty or ten P.M. He was kind to wife and children, but his views of his duties to his family were rather of a middle-class type. He expected five meals a day to be prepared for him, gave no assistance whatever in domestic matters, could not wake without being called, and 'looked for the boys to be managed,' without any resort to the stick. The eldest was a gentle, unselfish young fellow, but had quite as much hard work as he could well get through, and preferred spending his spare time in light employment for which he was paid. The second boy was obstinate, sulky, and backward, and inclined to 'put upon' the two schoolgirls who, on their part, were over-conscious of being three standards ahead of him, while the youngest was a high-spirited, mischievous lad, who stoned cows and horses when he was out of doors, and put pepper in the tea and salt in the pudding if he was kept in the kitchen. The girls had been promoted to a school two miles away, and it was impossible for them to be of the least use to their mother between eight-fifteen and four-forty-five.

The father's solution of the problem was to make the eldest daughter return home, but the mother knew that a crowded cottage is not a fit place for a rapidly growing girl, and after much thought arrived at the following modus vivendi. The boy of thirteen continues to attend the village school, and has a situation which occupies him for an hour and a half every day and the whole of Saturday. In consideration of this,
the father consents to carry water and do other work
which would have fallen naturally to the boy’s share,
but which it would have been practically impossible
to compel him to do. The two girls attend the more
distant school and take their small brother with them;
the necessity for arriving punctually keeps him out
of mischief on the way there, he is strictly forbidden
to leave the school premises during the dinner-hour,
and eagerness for his vegetable and pudding tea
generally brings him home safe and sound. The prin-
cipal meal of the day is postponed until six-thirty,
when the whole family can meet to enjoy it. The girl
of twelve goes to bed at seven in order to rise at five
and get her father’s breakfast; she then prepares
breakfast for the others, and cuts and packs up all
the school dinners. These consist of little but bread
and jam, but the mother pays sixpence a week so
that they may always have a cup of hot cocoa to drink
with it. The second girl sits up till nine to help her
mother, and is allowed to sleep two hours later than
her sister, and an occasional ‘dog watch’ is put in
to allow their duties to be changed. The mother
waits until the father returns from his final round,
and gives him his last meal, but does no more work
until ten or eleven the next day. On Saturdays the
two girls between them manage to do most of the
cleaning, besides holding their small brother in check.
The father, who is strongly attached to the little
fellow, undertook to ‘keep him in sight,’ by taking
him up to the farm, but found the task beyond him.
The very first day the farmer, who had just delivered
a final warning to all his men that any one caught
hitting a cow with a milking-stool, or requiring any-
thing heavier than a ‘swishy stick’ to manage a herd
would receive a fortnight's notice, caught him ill-treating one of the animals, and gave such an angry roar that the little rascal dived through the hedge like an eel and never dared appear on the premises again.

The washing, worst task of all, is done for nothing by a relative. By these means the family enjoys a fair amount of peace and comfort, but if the mother had had a grain less of intellect and will-power the home must have become a scene of poverty, disorder, and wretchedness.

The average position of the working-class wife is higher than is generally supposed. Any arrangement made by the wife without previous consultation with her husband is nearly always ratified by him, but the converse is by no means true. Doubtless this is to some extent because the wife knows the husband's views far better than he knows hers, but it is chiefly because on many vital subjects he does not know what his opinions are until she tells him. 'I'll ask the missis,' does not mean, 'I will tell her what I think, and find out how far our opinions agree,' but 'I haven't thought about it at all, and I'm not going to. It can be as my wife pleases.' After many years' experience of English family life, an old German governess told me, 'If I ask for any privilege, and a lady says, "I must consult my husband," I know that husband will be inexorable!'

I have often heard absurd inferences drawn from the habit that women in certain neighbourhoods have of referring to their husband as 'my master.' Master is here merely the equivalent of the German mann, or the familiar French homme à moi, and in the same districts is often used by children in the sense of
'grown-up man.' I remember suggesting to a little boy that he should touch his hat when he met me. He demurred, and I told him that his father always did so. He still refused. 'Ah 'm but a laad. Ah 'm not a master.'

The capable woman, especially if the wife of a man earning less than forty shillings a week, generally has the entire management of all the wages except the husband's pocket-money, which is usually calculated at a rate to cover the cost of his boots and Sunday clothes and the subscription to his Friendly Society. In cases where the wages are less than twenty-five shillings this is the almost invariable rule. However ill they were, even to the very day of their death I found that women patients kept the purse under their pillow and regulated the expenditure of the household. Men are so well aware that they cannot 'make the money go round' that they would hand their wages over to a sixteen-year-old daughter 'who knows what her mother used to do,' rather than make the attempt. Mothers so fully recognise that this is the woman's business that they will allow a young girl in service, as soon as she has self-supporting wages, to spend her money almost unchecked, convinced that 'it's the only way to learn 'em,' and that the learning ought to be acquired as far as possible before marriage, not after. At the same time she will take entire possession of the earnings of a boy of eighteen or nineteen, buying him what she thinks fit. And he, knowing that the money, left in her hands, will produce not merely food and clothes but bicycles, silver watches, yellow boots, or whatever else he has set his heart on, is quite content to have it so, and does not even resent the fact that through-
out the family these coveted possessions are spoken of as things ‘that mother has give him.’ Mothers firmly believe in the old saying, ‘The way to keep a man out of the mud is to black his boots,’ and always dress their sons as well as they possibly can.

Nothing is accounted a gift from the father unless it comes out of his pocket-money, and (like fathers in higher ranks) he is credited with getting very bad bargains. Some years ago I was induced to contribute to a sale of work (the dowdier and less dishonest sister of a bazaar) in South London. All the larger articles were to be returned to the donors unless sold for the price which they themselves named, and as I was anxious never to set eyes again upon the counterpane I had made with such a bad conscience, I asked an astute Walworthian what price I had better affix. ‘Would 4s. be too much?’ She appraised it carefully, and then said slowly, unwilling to hurt my feelings, ‘P’raps a nusban’ might.’ I decided not to risk it, and marked it at 2s. 9d., at which price it mercifully disappeared.

Although one would imagine that the larger share of worldly experience fell to the husband, it is always the wife who shows most caution with regard to getting bills receipted and so forth. A husband who was allowed to buy his own boots because one foot was slightly misshapen, and they had to be specially made for him in a little town five miles away, paid 14s., almost his week’s wages, for a pair. He could neither read nor write, and did not realise the possibility that any mistake could honestly be made with regard to what was, to him, such a large sum of money, came away without a receipt, and displayed an unusually rebellious temper when his wife asked him to return
on the following evening and obtain one. Six months later he was county-courted for the money and had to pay it for the second time—a circumstance which his wife, cruel only to be kind, never allowed him to forget.

If the upper classes understood to what a fine art superior working-class women have brought the almost infinite divisibility of money, they would not be so hasty in their generalisations as to what can, or cannot, be provided on an income ten or twenty times smaller than they are accustomed to deal with. I have found that persons with £5000 a year are totally unable to grasp how much can be done on £500, and those with £500 have just as little conception of what can be done on £50. The lady who spends £400 on dress believes that on £40 she would be a scarecrow, and her poorer cousin who spends £40 would have but little idea how to clothe any woman on £4. For example, I have often heard mistresses, who take an interest in the young servants who assist the 'cook-general,' assert that it is impossible for a girl in service to be suitably dressed indoors and out on less than £3, that she needs a pound for pocket-money, and that at least another pound must be allowed for less careful management than that which they (the mistresses) could exercise if the expenditure were left to their discretion. The conclusion they arrived at was that £10 a year was the lowest amount which could be called a self-supporting wage, and that any mother who accepted less for her young daughter must be making up the deficiency herself. Quite recently I came across two girls who had each been a little over three years in service; one was getting £6, the other £5. The first had everything that she could possibly want, including admirably made under-
clothing, and she had a large amount of trash in the way of belts, bangles and bead necklaces. The second girl, whose wages had only for one year been above £4, was equally well provided, and besides making her mother several presents, had saved a sovereign.

The housewife seldom talks much about her management; she simply tells you 'it's the odds that make the difference.' The nature and value of these 'odds' can only be estimated by those who have the most minute acquaintance with the families under consideration. For example, you hear that a certain man earns a guinea a week, of which he gives his wife 18s. 6d., that she has to pay a rent of 4s., and that she herself earns nothing, that there are five big children at school, and that the daughter in service only gets 2s. a week, 'which don’t hardly keep her in clo’es, she’s that heavy on her boots, and if they’re the leastest bit shabby her mistress won’t let her wear them not a minute longer.' She does not trouble to tell you that the girl has also 1s. a week washing allowance, which she brings to her mother every Saturday together with the little bundle which, put in with the rest of the wash, can scarcely cost an extra twopence in soap, soda, starch, and firing, while her cast-off boots are the only footgear of the second daughter. Later on you discover that the eldest boy earns 1s. 6d. a week for cleaning the boots of two young men whose position demands that they shall shine every day, instead of merely on Sundays, like ordinary mortals. The second boy earns a dinner and a penny on Saturday for washing down his uncle’s backyard, and the baby of the family earns her tea quite five times a week as the chosen playfellow of the only child at the all sorts shop.
Although, as a figure of speech, mothers dwell constantly upon the difficulty of finding 'bread to put in their mouths,' they set an extremely low value upon the meals provided by employers, and when told the wages of errand-boys, etc., it is always necessary to make a separate inquiry as to whether they receive in addition either breakfast, dinner, or tea, or all three, with supper on Saturdays. I was told complainingly that one boy was 'on'y getting fifteen shillings a month.' Considering that he was barely thirteen, and a mischievous, idle little rascal, I thought him dear at the price, but knowing the generosity of his employers, I inquired further, and found that he had six good solid meals every week, and often eight. And of another lad I was frequently told, 'Four shillings a week is all they gives to that great lad going on sixteen,' and then learned that he had four meals a day in addition, and his mistress half clothed the younger boys of the family.

The truth, but not the whole truth, is what one is so constantly offered. Another person who earned her living as a charwoman complained bitterly that while at one house she 'always had her four good meals,' at another in the same street she only had two. On inquiry, I found that at the first house she remained from eight till eight, at the second she remained from nine till three-thirty, and received an extra sixpence in money. These women had no object in deceiving me, and certainly not more than one of them was even trying to do so. They were simply as incapable of keeping all the essential facts steadily in view as an untrained person would be of marshalling all those brought to light by a Parliamentary commission.
Another reason why women so often have and hold the supreme authority, even when dealing with men of a partially civilised type, is that the husband is generally convinced of his wife's loyalty, and that he will be judged (if judged at all) by his everyday conduct, and not by his aberrations. Room for repentance is always left. In my earliest days of district nursing I often visited a costermonger's wife who lived in a loft over a stable. She was a strong and lively woman of a very communicative disposition. One day, thinking that, like most sufferers of her class, she would enjoy answering the question in detail, I asked her how she had lost the use of her right eye. She instantly diverted the conversation to a second-hand piano she intended buying, and the probable difficulty of getting it up the ladder which was the sole approach to her dwelling. After that I learnt to attribute to the husbands every injury of which I was not speedily given a full and particular account. In doing this, the men were seldom wronged, and yet it would, as a rule, have been an entire mistake to say that their wives were unhappy, or had found marriage a failure. If educated people would only subtract the huge allowance that they unconsciously make for the indignity of receiving a blow, they might recognise that the advantage is not always on the side of the wife who has nothing to fear but a constant drizzle of petty fault-finding, or the rankling wounds of pitiless sarcasm.

A further cause for the woman's preponderating influence in the home is, that even if jealous of her ceaseless devotion to her children, the working-man cannot help admiring it, cannot help having a more exact appreciation of the labour and sacrifice entailed
than the ordinary father of the upper classes could possibly have. He flies to arms at once if the children, even innocently, should appear to slight or undervalue her efforts. For example, three school-children, instead of eating what had been provided by their mother, went to dinner with a comparatively well-to-do relative who lived just outside the playground. The father, an unskilled labourer, heard of it, and was moved to most unusual wrath, and sternly forbade them ever to do such a thing again. 'What I earn, and what your mother cooks, is good enough for me, and it's got to be good enough for you until you can do for yourselves.'

In return for the mother's untiring affection, children will, as a rule, among the poor as among all other classes, judge her more leniently than they will any one else. The headmistress of a large middle-class boarding-school told me, 'If a mother does not appear on the day appointed a thousand excuses are made for her, but for a mere aunt none at all. It is too hot, or too cold, or too windy for darling mother, and they are glad she did not come, but a blizzard would not release an aunt from her promise.' The children of the poor have as much pleasure in giving their mother sixpence, or even a penny, as the children of the rich have in buying theirs some pretty trifle. They choose money because they can conceive of nothing more valuable, but when they reach the age of fifteen or sixteen it generally strikes them that these gifts, however pleasing to the mother, do not benefit her in any way, and they spend the money on something for her personal use.

But perhaps the chief reason why the average wife holds supremacy in the average home is because the
British workman, though provided with no liturgical form for the purpose, daily thanks the Eternal that he was not born a woman. As one man said to me good-humouredly, ‘If the missis can’t have her own way at home, bless us! where can she have it? Her house is all she ’s got. A man can always kick up a row outside if he wants to.’ It was somewhat difficult to imagine him imposing subjection on any one, but ‘thought is free.’

It was perhaps the converse of this opinion which made a small and exasperated woman exclaim in a vehement outburst of annoyance, ‘No wonder men want women to be religious! If I weren’t deeply religious I should kill every man I know.’ I suggested that if ever she found the restraints of religion too weak, a further check might be found in the practical difficulties of executing her plan, but she assured me that speed would make up for strength. Then, calming down, she said she ‘hoped it would be put upon her tombstone that she had never killed any one.’ An inscription that would have the advantage of being both newer and truer than those one commonly reads!

A woman I know very well once entered the room, interrupting a loud and angry dispute between her three children. The quarrel ceased with such suspicious suddenness that she insisted on knowing what they had been talking about. The two elder ones firmly refused to tell her, but the youngest, who had been in the minority and hoped to find a partisan, explained breathlessly, ‘We were talking of what we would put on your tombstone. I said it should be nothing but Mother, and they wanted to say when you were born, and rot like that!’
At the present moment there is a general tendency to under-rate the ordinary working-class wife and mother, and to regard her as a person so glaringly in need of instruction that every man and woman of the upper classes is capable of teaching her in detail every part of her duty. And it is more especially as the mother of very young children that she is considered a failure. I am not at all sure that the scientific-maternal cult of the baby would have altogether favourable results even on the reigning favourite, but one can have little doubt as to its effects upon the rest of the family—especially on the two or three most recently deposed. In a little leather-bound volume printed about one hundred and fifty years ago I read instructions for baby-rearing which are in strangely close accordance with the most modern views on the subject—but the authoress was ingenuous enough to add that to carry out the system in perfection, one baby would require the entire time of a strong young woman, and towards the end of the essay I learnt, without surprise, that she had been separated from her husband within a few years of her marriage. One knows very well that employers of moderate means have to decline to allow their gardeners to exhibit at horticultural shows, otherwise everything is neglected for the sake of one or two specialties. Specialisation is always dangerous, and more particularly so when it cannot be preceded by anything that could be called a liberal education. I remember a Queen's probationer who had been three years in a large general hospital, and was in addition a certified midwife, but was quite unable to wash and dress a healthy baby of two days old. The superintendent expressed astonishment at her ignorance of such an ordinary piece of routine, and she excused
herself by saying, ‘That is the duty of a monthly nurse. You can’t have anything to do with the baby. It’s so lowering.’

Interference ought to be based on the facts that we know better and do better than the persons with whom we are interfering, and our interference with the children of the poor cannot always be justified on these grounds. If I were to describe how I have seen babies fed and cared for in houses where the annual income ranged from £500 to £1500, the cases might easily be mistaken for those observed in the poorest homes. It is true that most of these children reached maturity, but that is because all the circumstances of their lives were not bad.

Working-class mothers are especially accused of laziness, apathy, and credulity. If rich mothers are so free from these vices, why then do they commonly hand over their children for at least twenty-two hours out of the twenty-four to the tender mercies of young women who are simply the daughters, sisters, and nieces of the very persons whom they are judging so hardly? To women who are young, who have neither formal instruction, nor long experience, nor ‘the tenderness which’ (a critic tells me) ‘is born of motherhood’?

And after making these arrangements for the care of their children, how many mothers will even inquire into any complaint that is brought against the nurse? I myself complained to an acquaintance that during her very frequent absences from home her little boys were treated in a harsh and bullying fashion by the two servants left in charge of them and the house, that they were shut in the nursery by themselves for hours at a stretch, or else passed their time in the
kitchen. I neither knew nor suspected anything worse, but surely such a report ought to have made at least as much impression upon a leisured and educated woman as one could hope to make upon a working-class mother even if 'it snowed of ' leaflets and health visitors? No notice was taken of my complaint. The elder child slowly changed from a chubby, beautiful baby of three into a thin, big-eyed, pathetic-looking boy of five, and presently the mother took him to a specialist in London, who at once declared that he was suffering from injudicious feeding, and that it must have been going on for a long period. The mother protested that he had been fed on milk puddings, fish, eggs, vegetables, etc., but the great man listened with polite disbelief. Searching inquiries were then made, and it was discovered that when the mother was out, that is to say, five days a week even when she was nominally at home, the child had practically lived on bread. Nothing had ever been cooked for him. The younger boy had had to do the same, but having no dislike to cold milk, he had drunk part of what was provided for puddings, and had therefore suffered less. A married woman of very wide social experience said to me recently, 'It is not the babies of the rich who are to be pitied, nor those of the decent poor, for the first have trained and experienced nurses, and the second are most tenderly cared for. It is the middle-class baby who is to be pitied, handed over to selfish and ignorant girls often not twenty years of age.'

A friend of mine, having observed positively cruel conduct on the part of a nurse, went to great trouble to find out where she lived in order to warn the children's mother of what was happening. The lady
listened to what she had to say, and then, without asking a single question, without a word of thanks, replied with cold insolence, 'I have every confidence in my children's nurse.' In another instance a friend noticed an upper nurse behave with great unkindness to a partly crippled child, forcing him to walk quickly on a hot, dusty day, and striking him when he pleaded that he was 'too tired' to do it. She remonstrated, and asked for the mother's address, which was refused. 'Then I shall follow you home,' she replied. Presently the nursemaid loitered behind, and in a furtive whisper gave the address, and she took a hansom and went at once to the house. Her husband was in a high official position, and the children's father chanced to be one of his subordinates, so that instead of open rudeness she only received complaints of bad health, assertions that it was impossible to part 'with such a trustworthy person, even if she were a little arbitrary at times—and of course every one knows how tiresome children can be.' My friend then told the tale to her husband, a man many years older than herself, and he was exceedingly angry with her for her attempted interference, and peremptorily requested her never to do anything of the kind again. How sordid and selfish and cowardly this conduct would seem if related of persons living in two rooms on a pound a week! And if a hundred instances showing equal callousness were collected, no matter over how wide an area, there are people who would clamour for the compulsory inspection of the methods of every working-class mother in a great city.

I knew another mother who spent eighty pounds on attending a Drawing-Room, a form which in her case was so far from being compulsory that her social
position barely made it possible, and then 'economised' by dismissing her little girl's nurse. The child was only five, a delicate, excitable little creature, who ought to have been kept out of doors as much as possible, and who from that moment was dependent upon the rare leisure of an overworked housemaid. Why is an uneducated woman, who wastes her husband’s wages and feeds her children on bread and jam such a much blacker sheep? Public opinion should at least be as outspoken in one case as in the other.

What the average working-class woman needs is not more interference after marriage, but more definite instruction before marriage, a realisation of her moral responsibilities, and greater cultivation of the reasoning powers. People who object to the liberal education of women for fear of unfitness them for domestic duties are not those who hold the highest views of those duties, and certainly are lacking in perception of the waste of time and health and life itself which results from performing them ignorantly. ‘If the iron be blunt, and he do not whet the edge, then must he put to more strength: but wisdom is profitable to direct.’ Even in cases where women have been given a considerable amount of instruction, total ignorance of the principles on which the rules given them are founded makes it difficult to apply their knowledge intelligently in varying circumstances.

One of the drawbacks to the moral supremacy of the working-class mother is that the treatment of the children is too exclusively regulated by her. A father may indulge his offspring to his heart’s content, but he may not discipline them. While they are very young this may be a needful precaution, as the paternal hand is apt to be too heavy, but the years
go on, and still the mother fails to realise that the children are becoming responsible beings, and can only learn by bearing some, at any rate, of the consequences of their actions. With regard to correction from teachers or neighbours, the father commonly takes the same view as the mother, ‘My children, right or wrong!’ A few months ago a working farmer found half a dozen boys cruelly stoning a horse and a cow. He caught two of them; and knowing it was useless to complain to their parents, pulled a stick from the hedge and gave them what he called ‘a good taste of it.’ Two hours later no marks of the punishment were visible, but both mothers trudged four miles to take out a summons against the farmer. Luckily for all the horses and cows in the vicinity, the only magistrate in court was the son of a working-man, and he peremptorily refused to grant a summons on such trivial grounds.

How many boys of the middle or upper classes would have dreamed of making any complaint to their parents, or have received any pity if they had done so? I remember a boy of ten going to his father, an admiral, with the complaint that a lad some five or six years his senior had boxed his ears. ‘One story is all very well until another is told. What did you say to him before he boxed your ears?’ The child hesitated, but finally repeated what he had said. ‘And if you ever say it again, I hope he’ll box them harder!’ was the sole response. Training of this kind is almost entirely lacking in working-class homes, and can never become common until the women have more confidence in the civilisation of their husbands.

Another drawback to the too greatly preponderating maternal influence is that an excessive amount
of the before-quoted 'endurance vile' is inculcated, and there is far too little attempt to remove any cause of discomfort or danger at its veritable root. The half-educated woman's motto appears to be, 'Make the best of things as they are,' while the half-educated man's very often is, 'Make the worst of them,' and it must be owned that his course—though generally stigmatised as empty rebellion—more frequently leads to reform, either from within or without. This is a typical conversation held with a cottager on the ever-recurring difficulty of the water supply.

'His grandfather's always on at Willy for "runnin' the roads," as he calls it, and sayin' he ought to be at work. He began work reg'lar hisself at eleven, and he'd been working on and off for a good three year before that, but childern must be some diff'rent from what they did used to be. It's hard enough to get Willy to go to the well to fetch a bucket of water, and he do take pretty nigh an hour doin' of it, and it isn't above half a gallon then, and his clothes sopped through. And I 've knowed him be two hours, and me waitin' for a drop o' water to boil the kettle.' I knew that a stronger-minded neighbour always timed her small sons when she sent them to the well, and if they took more than half an hour she emptied the pails into the rain-water tub and sent them back immediately for a fresh supply. The discipline had been practised twice in one morning upon her eldest and most obstinate child, but he had soon wearied of the struggle, and it had not needed to be exercised once in a year on any of the younger children. But I also knew that it is a deadly—and useless—crime to hold up one actual, visible, named and Christian
named mother as an example to another, so I only replied to part of her complaint:

'Willy would fetch it much more easily if he had a little yoke and a couple of cans. They keep the dust out better, and would not splash his clothes and boots.'

'They do cost seven and six,' she objected, and with wages at 17s. a week and rent at 3s. 9d., it was certainly a valid objection.

'I saw a very cleverly made little water-cart yesterday. It was contrived out of the three wheels of an old perambulator, and the buckets were slung on an iron bar.'

'We've never had no pram. I carried my babies Welsh fashion in a shawl, and they've pushed one another about in a sugar-box.'

'Even an iron hoop is a great assistance. Willy ought to carry two half-buckets instead of wrenching himself crooked by trying to carry a single full one.'

But forty years of endurance sap even the desire for amelioration, and Willy still carries a single bucket, dumped down at brief intervals, ambitiously full when he leaves the well, sadly empty when he gives it the last fatigued heave up the garden steps. Many conversations on similar lines have been held with town mothers, who would send their children on errands after dark. They could not go themselves, their husbands would not, they could not keep any groceries in the house because they had no cupboard, and if they had a cupboard they had no lock, and if they were to get a lock the key would always be lost—and so on, until I was reminded of the pig who could not be got to market, with the highly important difference, that he ultimately arrived at his destination, and I did not.
And yet when I call to mind how the meanest street, the narrowest courts, the most wretched hovels that I have entered have been glorified by the patience, the fortitude, the self-abnegation of the wives and mothers who lived in them, I marvel that I, or any one else, should dare to utter a word of criticism of those whose lines have fallen in such hard places.

Instruction in manners is left almost entirely to the mother, and it is a curiously negative teaching, as may be seen from its results. I have seldom experienced the smallest intentional rudeness from the children of the working-classes, but any active, or even verbal, courtesy on their part is almost as rare an occurrence. Commission is a crime, omission is scarcely an error. The mother’s instructions are usually based on the one leading principle, ‘Don’t put yourself forward.’ On the rare occasions when the father finds fault with the children’s manners it is generally on the score of what they have not done, and neither they nor their mother are inclined to accept his criticism.

Manners are, to a great extent, purely traditional, but the more active-minded women observe and compare. A mother, whose daughter had recently given up the undoubtedly difficult berth of lady’s maid to an ex-factory girl who had married a wealthy merchant precisely three times her age, explained to a neighbour, ‘She wasn’t a lady, and she wouldn’t try to be one, so my daughter gave notice.’ The neighbour’s young sister broke in eagerly, ‘I remember that Minnie W—. We was at school with her, but’ (triumphantly) ‘mother wouldn’t never let us play with her, she was too rough and common. Mother was always very patickler. “You can’t help who
you 're at school with, it 's who you go with," she 'd always say.'

At the present day the formal greetings offered by children to their pastors and masters have become antiquated, and mutual awkwardness is caused by the fact that nothing has taken their place. Recently a girl of sixteen told me that she had met the vicar of a country town whose Bible-class she had attended for some months, and that she had said, ' Hullo, Mr. Brown!' and he had replied, 'Hullo, Fanny!' I suggested that this was hardly correct, but she could not be convinced that she had shown any lack of manners. I asked a neighbouring rector if hullo! was the form of address used by his younger parishioners, and he replied, 'Well, no; it may be the newest thing and will reach us presently. The proper form here is to say in an identificatory way as you sidle past, "Mist' Brown!" or "Mis' Brown!" as the case may be.' In another parish not even the choir-boys touch their hats to the vicar. He has been there for twenty-eight years and has never failed to take off his hat to their parents, so that they have had no lack of example. But in daily life and with reference to young people the power of good example is much overrated; without precept it so often passes unnoticed. The silent practice of such virtues as punctuality, accuracy, despatch, unselfishness simply saves other people from having to exercise them.

The wife's superior knowledge of manners is always conceded by the husband. I heard a burly north-countryman ask his wife for 'a coop o' tay and a bit o' cheese,' stretching out one hand for each. 'Howd thy pley-att!' she cried as sharply as if he had been an obstinate boy of seven, and he meekly obeyed.
The refinement of the wives, however, varies to a degree quite as marked as that of the political knowledge of their husbands, and far more inexplicably. I sent presents to two elderly women living next door to one another; they had been born in the same parish, received the same scanty amount of schooling, and married men of the same occupation and rate of wages. One of the women, after waiting until she could see me alone, said in the most clear-cut accents, 'I appreciate your kindness very highly, I assure you.' The other hailed me excitedly on the high-road, 'Mrs. Mason telled I she 's a-goin' to have hern for a outside, but I shan'n.' (Dropping into a more confidential tone.) 'It does be a inside, bain't un?'

When forms of courtesy are taught, one can frequently recognise them as those current at an earlier day among the upper classes. For instance, a poor woman will say at parting to a lady who has been calling on her, 'Thank you for your visit'—the very words that I have heard used by old ladies in the provinces to their equals. I can recall very old-fashioned officers in both services who would not refer in a letter to a friend's wife or daughter except as 'excellent' or 'charming.' At the present moment I know many poor women who would not mention my relatives' names to me unless accompanied by complimentary adjectives. As a small child I remember hearing still smaller children taught to take leave of a roomful of people by giving a separate farewell to two or three of the most important, and to include all the rest, with some attempt at a sweeping bow, in the formula, 'Good-night, every one.' On summer evenings I always hear groups of Council School children part with special greetings to those
they know best, followed by a cry of 'Good-night, all!' but it only seems to be done when boys and girls are playing together. Boys generally withdraw from one another in silence.

A little girl, formerly a patient, once spent a week with me, and four times a day, when given permission to get down from her chair, she never failed to make the same speech: 'Excuse me leaving the table.' I can only imagine that it is a form used when there is 'comp'ny' in servantless households, and the mother goes to dish up the pudding, but I did not like to inquire. I heard one woman carefully instructing her little son in a curious etiquette with regard to the use of a teaspoon: 'No, you must not drink all your tea with a spoon, and you must not keep on handling it. You may stir the tea round once, and then taste it once to see if it is sweet enough, and then don't touch the spoon any more unless you have a second cup.' The privilege of that once had been lost long before my nursery days.

It is unfortunate that people can neither bring about a greater similarity of manners, nor tolerate any difference. I was reading a book which posed as a young girl's novel, but which was really a thinly disguised treatise on 'good form' for the use of the German Backfisch. The heroine, a good-hearted hoyden of fourteen, goes to stay with her relatives in town, and from morning till night is remorselessly instructed. The first day at dinner she innocently helped herself to salt with her finger and thumb, and was utterly abashed by a horrified whisper from her cousin, 'Mit dem Messer!' English taste would probably prefer a girl's fingers to a greasy knife. In point of manners, neither rich nor poor will make any
allowances, but the least educated are generally the least tolerant, and draw the wildest conclusions from any breach of custom, however trivial. Twenty years ago some friends of mine, travelling in the East, were talking to a party of Bedouins about Lady Hester Stanhope, and asked how they knew that she was mad. 'She put sugar in her coffee,' was the reply.

Manners vary perceptibly as one goes from north to south, or east to west. Accustomed to the suavity of south-country railway guards, I have never forgotten my first interview with a north-country one. 'Is that the London train?' I asked. 'Eh?' 'Is that the London train?' 'Ay.' If I went into the roughest cottage in the Peak district on a wet day, and left my cloak in its usual resting-place, the wooden chair nearest to the door, on my return I invariably found that it had been carefully spread before the fire to dry. In London and the south of England this practical kindness was rarely shown to me or any of my nurses; on the other hand, the artificial courtesy of helping us on with our cloaks was much more generally displayed. It must, however, be remembered that a large kitchen fire is found all the year round in the north, while elsewhere fuel has to be economised. The kindly intention may have been equal in both cases. At any rate, the British love of the oppressed is found all over the country. Any neglect or oversight on the part of a probationer was carefully concealed from me. I have known patients circumstantially describe visits that had not been paid, and attribute effects to poultices that had never been mixed, to try and shield nurses who owned that, for lack of time, they had not been within half a mile of the persons in question. It is a delightful trait
of character, but intensely exasperating, and does much to nullify some of the most useful social measures that have ever been passed. The under-dog must always be protected, even by the undermost animals whom five minutes before he was grievously biting. Benevolent people of all classes would save themselves from much disappointment if they kept firm hold of the fact that the oppressed, although different from the oppressor, is not necessarily a more worthy person.

It was recently decided by a small majority that Mary Barton was unfit to be given as a Council School prize. The only possible reason why it can be unfit is that it is beyond the power of pupils of thirteen or fourteen to understand it, and if the prejudice is once created that a prize book is 'dry,' it is unlikely to be opened in later years. Any knowledge that young people could derive from the book could only be a benefit to them. It needs to be recognised that children may be apparently familiar with coarse, and even vile, language, and yet have no definite idea of what is implied by it, and be incredibly ignorant of everything that could act as a check or a warning. Children in all classes of life pick up the language of their elders, whatever it may be, and talk glibly of things that they do not understand, but the children of the poor are not given the benefit of the doubt. I am often told with horror, 'There is nothing those children don't know.' I can only say that I am constantly coming across young people between twelve and eighteen, brought up in the poorest of homes, who have been left in an ignorance of all physical facts which in another class of life would be called innocence, and is, indeed, often given that name among the poor. A favourite boast of the respectable
mother is, 'I've brought up my children that innocent they don't know nothing.' And a feeble protection this 'innocence' proves!

In considering modern domestic life among the poor as a whole, one most unsatisfactory feature must not be omitted. Owing to the prevalence of 'fluid labour,' a large number of married women are at the present day exposed to great temptations. A man gets work fifty or a hundred miles away, and has no idea whether it will last one month, or three. If he has only one or two very young children, the wife generally accompanies him; if there are more, it does not seem worth while to 'break up the home,' and he therefore goes alone, remitting part of his wages every week. There are men who from sheer selfishness cease to remember the needs of those no longer under their eyes, but the average husband generally sends a sum larger in proportion to the necessary expenses than the wife has been accustomed to receive. He does it, partly because the family have, as a rule, been on short commons for some time before they agree to separate, even if not actually 'behindhand,' partly because he seldom grasps to what an extent the weekly outlay is reduced by his absence, and partly because he expects his wife to save up for the next 'slack time.' If the wife has many relatives and friends at hand, probably all goes well, but in a large percentage of cases she gradually falls into bad habits. The constant care of young children, with no one to take the responsibility off her hands for an hour, day or night, weighs down her spirits and irritates her nerves; she cannot take the trouble to cook proper meals 'when there's no one to eat them,' and presently, from dulness and lack of nourishment,
the temptation to drink arises, and then there is a rapid downfall.

Doubtless the matter will ultimately adjust itself, and these women as a class will become as self-dependent as the numerous sailors' wives who successfully bear a similar strain for at least three years out of every four, but in the meantime there is much misery which might possibly be prevented if the existence of the danger were more generally recognised.
VIII

THE SERVICE OF THE POOR

"The obligation of philanthropy is for all ages, but if we consider the particular modes of philanthropy which Christ prescribed to His followers, we shall find that they were suggested by the special conditions of the age. The same spirit of love which dictated them, working in this age upon the same problems, would find them utterly insufficient; no man who loves his kind can in these days rest content with waiting as a servant upon human misery, when it is in so many cases possible to anticipate and avert it.'

"Humanity is erroneously considered one of the commonplace virtues. If it deserved such a place there would be less urgent need than, alas! there is for its daily exercise among us. In its pale shape of kindly sentiment and bland pity it is common enough, and is always the portion of the cultivated. But humanity, armed, aggressive, and alert, never slumbering and never wearying, moving like an ancient hero over the land to slay monsters, is the rarest of virtue.' These two quotations, one from *Ecce Homo* and one from John Morley, are among the safest guide-posts towards the right lines of social service. The particular branch in which I have been engaged, that of district nursing, appears to those who
have most closely studied the modern conditions of labour in town and country, to be an agency full of promise. Stimulated by their praise of the system, hundreds of benevolent persons have hastened to provide their parish with a nurse, but in only too many cases they have not really understood the possibilities of the work, its variety, or its difficulties, and they have neither chosen women who could steer their own course, nor given effectual guidance to those who, well trained for the simplest part of their duties, are nevertheless blind to the broader aspects of social problems.

What is the object of those who so earnestly advocate the extension of the system, and make so many self-sacrificing efforts in order to do it? Do they desire to weaken the sense of responsibility which the poor at present feel for their sick friends and neighbours, to leave them as ignorant as they are of the principles of health and of all rational ways of preventing illness, and to make them far more helpless than they are now? Surely not; but unless the promoters of this charitable scheme keep clearly and continually before their minds the idea that district nursing is a means and not an end, and choose as district nurses women capable not merely of skilful and conscientious attention to individual patients but of forming (or at least accepting) the broadest and most sanely balanced opinions as to their duties and responsibilities, these will be the results. Too much work among the poor is undertaken, as if the past had no lessons for us, and the future no dangers.

Let us consider, from a strictly practical point of view, what the possibilities of district nursing really
are, and how district nurses and those who support them may hope to effect a lasting improvement in the condition of the poor. If too much stress should appear to be laid upon the incidental duties of the nurse, it must be remembered that it is taken as a **sine qua non** that she shall have received the highest technical training, and be a person of varied professional experience.

District patients will generally fall into the following classes:

1. Acute cases: *(a)* non-infectious; *(b)* infectious; *(c)* highly infectious.
2. Serious chronic cases.
3. Slight chronic cases.
4. Maternity work.
5. Accidental injuries.
6. Dying patients dismissed from hospitals.
7. Operation cases.
8. General care of the aged.

In severe, acute cases the highest standard of nursing must be continuously maintained, as not merely comfort, or speedier recovery, depend upon it, but life itself. Where this is not possible, the risk of undertaking them is too great. I have known instances where district nurses wore themselves out, and neglected intense chronic sufferers, in order to visit a pneumonia case four times daily, and then during the night the half-delirious patient has been allowed to walk barefoot on a stone floor, or lean out of an open window dressed in nothing but a nightshirt, and with an outdoor temperature far below freezing point. Unless there is a capable person to carry on the
work at night, little but harm can result from the attempt to keep these patients in their own homes.

The third division of this class cannot be undertaken by a district nurse unless she entirely gives up general nursing, and the second not without numerous precautions as to disinfection.

The serious chronic cases are those in late stages of cancer and consumption, and those confined to bed by paralysis, etc. These patients either have relatives who can be taught to attend to them, and are willing to do so, or they have not. In the latter case they should be removed to the workhouse infirmary. Rules commonly given to the district nurse appear to be based on the supposition that her patients are alone in a world of hard-heartedness, and that she is their sole stay and comfort. In reality, the nurse will find that nearly all these patients have relatives and friends who, with a little instruction, much encouragement, and some keeping up to the mark, are able and willing to do far more than she herself could possibly accomplish—granting the hindrances of time and space. It is neither practicable nor desirable for her to take the relatives' natural place.

With regard to slight chronic cases, the patient, usually a woman above middle age, has been accustomed to attend to them herself. It may be possible to teach her a better method, but severe pain and danger being absent, she will probably prefer her own haphazard system, and sooner or later, unless exceptionally intelligent, is almost certain to return to it.

Setting aside all complicated social questions, the great length of time required by maternity work makes it difficult for the nurse to undertake much of
it, and it can seldom be done without sacrificing other and perhaps more just claims. To take sole charge of a case herself must be the exception, but it should be one of her aims to exercise an informal supervision of all the cases in the district.

Severe accidental injuries are usually, and wisely, treated in hospitals. As far as the district nurse is concerned, the work does not often extend beyond simple fractures, bad cuts, bruises, burns, and sprains. She can be of considerable use in recommending and applying the right remedies, and in preventing small hurts from being needlessly aggravated, but she must be prepared to find her cleanly applications often nullified by such mixtures as ‘ink and terbakker juice’ spread on open sores. The result is seldom as deadly as one might expect, and she learns to tolerate these irregularities of treatment when it is not possible to anticipate and forestall them. A doctor told me a few months ago, ‘I had a case of typhoid which did very well indeed on bread and cheese, and potatoes and gravy, and the woman insisted on sitting up at the kitchen table when she had her meals, and a man with gastric trouble managed pork sausages. Providence is often kind to patients who do as they like.’

The improved accommodation in superior workmen’s houses, the growing fear of rooms where countless other sufferers have lived, and the possibility of obtaining the co-operation of trained nurses without expense to the patients, all conduce to the increasing frequency with which modern surgeons perform major operations in working-class homes. Unless there are at least two nurses available in the district, one to carry on the ordinary routine, the other to give almost exclusive attention to these absorbing cases,
it is unwise to undertake the work. The relatives cannot reasonably be expected to have sufficient nerve or sufficient knowledge to bear much responsibility during the first six or seven days.

The care and protection of the aged and infirm is one of the most necessary parts of the district nurse's work, while the supervision of children of school age is the most useful and hopeful. Here, at least, the nurse's watchword can be Prevention, not mere alleviation.

In taking this unenthusiastic survey, are we trying to prove that there is no work for the district nurse to do, or that when there is work, she will not be able to do it? Far from it; we magnify her office. If we seem to think little of what she, personally and directly, can do as a nurse, it is because we estimate so highly her countless chances of rightly and wisely influencing her patients and their friends. Visiting their homes at all hours of the day, considered by them in the light of a working-woman, she cannot fail, unless lacking in common sense and sympathy, to know the life and nature and needs of the poor more exactly than doctor, clergyman, district visitor, or almsgiver of any description. The veils of reserve, or of hypocrisy and mendacity, are at least temporarily lifted, and the nurse may learn their real thoughts, their real incomes, and their real expenses.

With regard first to strictly professional matters: the nurse must encourage whatever right measures have been taken by the friends, and induce them to work with her during her daily visits, and to learn all that she can teach them of skilled nursing, as far as that particular case is concerned. Very many of the relatives are touchingly eager to do everything them-
selves, and only yield place to the nurse out of their generous recognition that skill can in some ways do more for the sufferer’s relief than untaught love. The one thing that I have found invariably excites gratitude is the patient, individual teaching of women who are no longer young, and who have suffered, and seen others suffer, from their ignorance.

Whenever I could induce the patients’ friends to make any nursing appliance, I generally found that they were enormously pleased with the results, and greatly preferred their own manufacture—however cobbled and imperfect—to anything that could be given them. Man, and even woman, is a lazy animal, but nature has balanced his indolence by providing a ‘joy of the maker’ which is a sufficient reward for the most laborious effort.

The district nurse’s immediate object is tending the sick; her essential business in the homes of the poor is, as Dr. Gabriel Maurance, one of the French pioneers of district nursing, has expressed it, combating illness dès l’origine by inculcating a knowledge of the laws of health, and raising her pupils to a higher plane by teaching the elements of a more reasoned order of life in a way acceptable to them and understood by them. The divisions and sub-divisions of her theme are numberless; some among them being cleanliness, sobriety, thrift, judicious expenditure of money and time and strength, the care of young children, consideration for youth and old age, self-control, tenderness for the suffering, reverence for the dying, fortitude and ‘divine discontent.’

The poor are extremely sensitive to small amenities, and I have known women living in sordid poverty who were far more easily swayed by the opinion of a
lady who had simply 'moved' to them than they would have been if she had awkwardly or ungraciously shown them some substantial kindness. 'Pap with an hatchet' may be all very well among social equals, but more ceremony is needed when there is a gap in position and education between the persons concerned. At the same time, the wide differences between the mental and moral culture of one patient and another may make wide differences of treatment necessary, although the spirit that directs it is the same. With one the nurse may have to be brief, literal, serious, almost severe; with another she needs powers of half playful persuasion. Towards a patient who likes her and is ready to accept whatever she says, but is unaffected by anything that could be called argument, she may have to show a little mock arbitrariness; in dealing with another member of the very same household she must carefully explain the real reasons for preferring the course that she recommends.

It may frequently happen that at the request of clergymen or ladies of the committee, the nurse enters the house of the superior and strictly exclusive poor, and finds herself regarded with prejudice and suspicion, and her offers of assistance refused. When this is the case it is unreasonable to show any sign of offence or displeasure. Surely the roughest refusal is a social virtue compared with a lazy or self-seeking indifference which would hand over the most sacred responsibilities to any one, competent or not? I listened with a shudder of horror when a girl of three- or four-and-twenty said to me, 'Oh, we go out everywhere now; mother has a trained nurse.' Perhaps only a nurse knows how bad, and how good, a nurse
can be, and how quickly most persons deteriorate when freed from supervision and criticism. The district nurse should never accept a first, or even a seventh refusal of help as final. With tact and patience she will always win the day decisively enough to be able to benefit the patient considerably.

Occasionally the same rejection comes from the ignorant and disreputable poor, and much the same course must be followed. The nurse should never be *in haste* to do good. The smallest change for the better that a poor person makes voluntarily, and will continue to make, is of more importance (except in highly infectious cases) than the compulsory, and therefore temporary, adoption of the most advanced system of nursing. If she can peaceably introduce a Hinckes-Bird ventilator into a practically air-tight bedroom, it will do the invalid and her family more good than if they had accepted for a few days, sorely against their will, all the laws of hygiene. If, in addition, she can induce the man of the house to make and fix that simple arrangement, it will be under his special protection, and she may be sure that it will never be removed. I have known many a husband spend his Saturday half-holiday in making some nursing contrivance for his sick wife or child, with the aid of a neighbour who had a ‘notion’ of carpentry or whatever trades were involved in the manufacture. One of the treasures of my district cupboard was an iron fracture cradle made by an engineer. I must own that he would do nothing for his own family, but philanthropists of that type are probably rarer among the poor than elsewhere.

While apparently entering freely into conversation
with her patients, the nurse must in reality guide it, and guide it not merely into cheerful and harmless, but practically useful channels. When the complaint is brought forward that the poor do not make much use of the institutes founded for their benefit, and the conclusion is drawn that they do not wish for them, that they knowingly reject the advantages offered, sufficient allowance is not made for the timidity commonly felt by the uneducated as soon as they are on strange ground; the first steps need to be made very easy and simple. Also, these organisations are seldom advertised with enough skill and energy to make even their existence known among the classes most in need of them.

Probably no subject will afford the district nurse more opportunities of dropping words in season than the feeding, clothing, and general treatment of children. In one house she will find that they are allowed to grow up self-centred and lazy; no claims are made upon their time and yearly increasing strength; their overworked mother toils, a hopeless drudge from morning till night. The truly unselfish mother is not the one who does all the work herself, but the one who patiently teaches her children, boys as well as girls, all that she knows. Almost without exception, the best husbands and fathers I have found among the poor have been men whose mothers 'learned 'em to work, and seed they did their fair share.' These men will toil on bravely, week after week when necessary, while the others, not originally worse or more selfish, are conscious martyrs the second day of their wife's illness, grumble the third, swear loudly the fourth, on the fifth shake their fist (not always metaphorically) in the nurse's face, and on the sixth will
order their wife to ‘quit foolin’ and get up and cook a man’s dinner.’

Perhaps in the very next cottage hard, unsuitable work is thrown upon ill-developed little frames, and still harder words and blows fall upon the unhappy children if they fail to satisfy parents who have the instincts of slave-drivers without their excuses. Interference in such cases is a delicate matter, but when the nurse is generally liked there are few things that she cannot say if she awaits the right moment.

Years ago my music teachers all told me, ‘The first thing you have to learn to do is how to keep strict time, the second is how not to keep it.’ Certainly the first lesson that all workers among the poor must lay to heart is that human nature is alike wherever you find it, but they are not what my patients call ‘learnt out’ until they realise that there are, nevertheless, subtle differences which may have a practical effect upon daily life. One of these differences, and a large part of the preventive and protective work of the N.S.P.C.C. is rendered possible by it, is that uneducated parents are not still further exasperated against the children in whose interests they have been warned, threatened, prosecuted, fined, and even imprisoned. On the contrary, their natural parental feelings are often reawakened by the shock. Nor do they in all cases bear malice against the known informer. On two occasions during the last few years I have been compelled to report mothers for gross neglect, in one case accompanied by extreme cruelty. The younger and, comparatively speaking, innocent mother promptly turned over a new leaf, and in less than a year her children were, as the Inspector
declared, 'simply unrecognisable. If the schoolmistress had not pointed them out, I could scarcely have believed they were the same.' Even while she was still under supervision she seemed to bear no grudge against me, never prevented her children from trotting at my heels, and, indeed, appeared grateful that I should 'take notice' of them. The other unfortunate woman had gone too far on the downward road before any check was put upon her. All warnings were disregarded, and after she had been twice imprisoned the children were removed from her guardianship, and—which, to a person in her state of degradation, was probably a worse punishment—the husband was compelled to pay more than a third part of his wages towards their maintenance. I did not deliberately avoid the woman, but when we met I only gave her the briefest of greetings, naturally believing that any needless conversation on my part would be regarded as an annoyance, or even a calculated insult. Much to my surprise she complained to several of her neighbours, 'I don't see why she should always be so short with me. I'm sure I never passes her but what I do my civility' [curtsy]. And she reduced the Society's Inspector to helpless laughter by announcing publicly, 'He's been as kind to me as a father!'

Drink and the coarser forms of selfishness are commonly considered to be the sole origin of cruelty to children, but the irritability and arbitrariness caused by overwork and anxiety and a hard and joyless life are frequent sources of equally real if less glaring unkindness, and it might be well to endeavour to teach some parents to try and distinguish between work that is done for a child's good, and work that is done to gratify what in another station of life we
should call social ambition. Cleanliness, for example, is a great and health-giving virtue, but that exaggeration of its importance which makes heavy, foreboding hearts under spotless pinafores is little removed from a selfish vice.

A poor woman, dying of consumption at the age of thirty-two, said to the nurse who attended her during the last few weeks of her life, 'I had eight brothers and sisters who died between the ages of six and eighteen, and my mother had made their lives so wretched that when they were told they must die not one of them showed the smallest regret. From the age of nine I constantly thought of drowning myself.' Her own married life was childless, and in every way unfortunate, and no sooner had death set her free from her drunken husband than the disease which had swept away all her family suddenly developed in herself. Her life seemed to me one of the dreariest I had ever known, but she must have seen portions of it in a different light, for the hymn that she was most anxious to have sung at her funeral was, 'The radiant morn has passed away.'

It may sometimes be the duty of the nurse to help to bring such parents as these to justice before they have driven their children to the bitter end; but oftener—infinently oftener—she will be forced to admire loving patience under difficulties which well-to-do people can scarcely imagine, and if the love and forbearance seem too weak for the constant strain, encouragement will generally be wiser than even the gentlest fault-finding. But a check of some kind must be given; cruelty, like jealousy, grows by what it feeds on. In its small beginnings it can easily be restrained, but parents soon learn to hate the child
to which they have been positively cruel; its very shrinking, even its terrified efforts to please them, are all fuel to the flames.

The nurse need not confine her instruction strictly to her patients and their immediate friends. As she walks in the streets, or journeys in a tram-car, she will have frequent openings for saying a word in reference to the care of young children, and this does not need the same courage in her that it does in outsiders, however well qualified they may be to give advice. Her uniform is such a protection that, with the exercise of the most ordinary tact and discretion, her suggestions will probably be accepted as a favour, instead of an insult, or an uncalled-for interference. She must not, however, imagine that her opinion will be received with a respect in proportion to the ignorance of her hearers. The mother with half a dozen bonny children within call will listen amicably, and often with real interest, to the nurse's theories as to the right upbringing of the seventh. She knows from experience the difficulties of rearing healthy children, and she is ready to own that hers is only one of several possible ways, and that that known to the nurse may be better, at any rate for the child in question. While the slattern, with one wretched infant in her unmotherly arms and seven in their untimely graves, listens with scarcely veiled contempt, and mutters a coarse version of a coarse proverb as the baffled teacher turns away. Most district nurses begin by thinking it is their mission to make bad people good, and are half vexed to find that nearly all their successes are in the line of making good people better. Nevertheless, progress is made; public opinion steadily improves, few individuals have the courage to defy
it, and we may reasonably hope that in times not far distant gross ignorance of parental duties and persistent child neglect will be as rare among the poorest classes of the population as active, intentional cruelty has already become.

The nurse must especially set herself against the listless or mischievous idleness of the young, and one cause of it speedily becomes plain to her. The children have been taught at school to read and write, to sew, knit, and draw—occupations enough for all their leisure. But at school every implement was provided freely. At home she will find that the great majority are without books to read, or with worse than none, without pens, paper, or pencils, without even a thimble or a reel of cotton, and almost certainly without anything in the shape of an indoor amusement. Here may be opportunities for her to make, or suggest to others, some small gift that will be stimulating, not pauperising, and help break up the mental apathy and sluggishness which does so much to create and perpetuate poverty?

The district nurse who would be a Health Missioner must steadily set her face against quacks and quack medicines, both of which play such a disastrous part among the poor. It must not be supposed that their victims are *malades imaginaires*; unhappily the sufferings are as real as the imagined remedies are expensive and injurious. The purchasers of quack medicines may be divided into three classes: the first class the nurse can help directly, the second indirectly, while the third, in the present state of the world, can scarcely be helped at all by individual effort, and need legal protection from their own folly and others' greed.
The first class consists of those whose illness, though painful and distressing, arises from such obvious and removable causes as badly cooked and too monotonous food, over-exertion, tight lacing, bad air and unsuitable clothing. Without infringing the doctor's rights, the district nurse can give cheap and homely advice on all these points. She must never let herself be drawn into heated or even serious discussions.

'If children understood reason,' said Rousseau, 'there would be no need for us to educate them.' A poor woman who understood reason would not buy quack medicines, and it is far better that the result of the conversation should be summed up in this fashion to a neighbour, than that she should have been irritated by arguments that she cannot follow: 'Nurse she do make game of me for buying them there pills at three an' six a box. She says every doctor in the town knows just what 's inside of 'em, and could make the lot for a farthing, but the doctors' union up in London would be on to 'em pretty quick if they demeaned theirselves to make such nasty rubbish.'

In all instruction offered to the friends one has to be guided largely by their degree of mental culture, as information thoroughly sound and useful in itself may be distorted into most dangerous doctrines by passing through the medium of a hazy mind and a scanty vocabulary. A friend of mine recently said to her servant, 'If you always forget to take Dr. ——'s medicine, what is the use of paying a shilling for it? If you fill a bottle with water from the pump and forget to drink it, it will do you as much good and save the shilling.' This was repeated by the girl in the following shortened form: 'Mrs. —— says
Dr. ——’s stuff is about as much good as her rain-water pump!’

The second class of persons who resort to quack remedies are suffering from some serious and deep-rooted disorder, and the nurse must do her utmost to make them seek competent medical advice before it is too late. We hear a great deal, and it is right that we should, of loss of life and health from hazardous or unnecessary operations, but only those who work among the poorest of the stationary poor have any conception of the suffering caused by the non-performance of some comparatively simple operation, the safety and utility of which is thoroughly established by the general surgical experience of the last fifty years. It must be remembered that, broadly speaking, the poorest class of sufferers are not found in our hospitals. They die in their own homes, succoured by their own neighbours, or are moved—too late—to the workhouse infirmary. Perhaps some conception of the difference between the character of hospital and district work may be grasped when I say that if in a large town six hundred patients were entered on our books, from a hundred and eighty to two hundred of them died before the year was out. Hospitals, as a rule, deal neither with infants nor aged persons, and they never knowingly accept hopeless cases.

The third class of sufferers are the most to be pitied and the most difficult to help—those whose illness is known by all trained men to be hopeless. If they are rich the doctor is in constant attendance, and his services not only keep up the patients’ spirits, but drive away the quack and his nostrums. Moreover, educated patients are capable of understanding that
cure is impossible, and that doctor and nurse alike can only strive to slacken the inevitable progress of the disease, and to alleviate the pain that they cannot avert. When a poor person's case is hopeless, the overworked, underpaid doctor turns his attention to some one else, and only the nurse is left to defend the closely besieged fortress from the quack and his abominations. It would often be heart-breaking to see the faith with which painfully hoarded money is squandered on bottled ditch-water or its dried equivalent, if there were not a counter-irritant in the reflection that the very same patients who thankfully pay seventeen shillings a bottle or five and sixpence a box for something actively injurious to them, have grudged ninepence to a qualified doctor, and whined pitifully to induce a respectable chemist to make up prescriptions at a quarter the usual price, instead of half, as he had charitably undertaken to do. One hears little of the virtues of chemists, but I have never had any difficulty in discovering one who, for ready money, would willingly supply the independent poor at greatly reduced rates.

Another way in which the nurse can show her genuine interest in her patients is by suggesting—very cautiously and laying no stress upon the matter—means by which the housework can be lessened and lightened. No one who has not closely observed poor people's ways can imagine how much needless drudgery is caused by the general absence of doorscrapers, door-mats, brushes, dust-pans, trays, and suitable floor-covering, nor how large and exhausting an amount of scrubbing is done in many of the dirtiest looking houses. Uneducated women do not set a sufficiently high value upon their own labour; in fact,
it seems to have no appreciable price in their eyes, and is not held worthy of a moment's consideration except by the 'bone-idle.' A woman whose husband was better educated than herself told me that he suffered from an exhausting internal complaint, and that he 'had a notion' it was aggravated by drinking tea made with rain-water which had been kept in a metal pail. I confirmed the 'notion,' and she said at once, 'I'll buy a big earthenware basin.' The idea of buying a jug which held as much and cost the same money did not seem to enter her head. She was perfectly willing to handle an intolerably awkward basin a dozen times a day, and mop up all the water that must unavoidably have been spilt whenever she tried to pour any into kettle or saucepan.

Owing to her generally recognised opportunities of knowing the poor as they really are, the district nurse's advice will often be asked by those anxious to work among them or to benefit them in any way. By giving the results of her experience she may be able to do some good, and will almost certainly prevent no inconsiderable amount of harm. She will assist beginners in the difficult task of giving without pauperising, and will especially impress upon them the elementary but constantly overlooked facts that, while cleanliness and whole garments may coexist with all but the most acute stages of poverty, dirt and rags are not infrequent accompaniments of high wages and low ideals. Taking care not to appear a rabid teetotaller, she can explain to the young district visitor the measureless harm that her doles of portwine and brandy may be doing, not only to grown-up people, but to children. When alcohol was ordered for young children, I always had it put in a medicine
bottle and measured out in spoonfuls. So far from being merely an acquired taste, the sensation caused by wine and spirits is peculiarly pleasing to them, and while they are at an unreasonable age it is far better that they should regard the feeling as one of the alleviations of illness rather than that they should associate it with articles of everyday use. Without allowing her interference to be suspected, the nurse can let the too-confiding curate know that the aggregate wages of the startlingly dirty family to whom he sends beef and brandy and blankets, and for whom he makes appeals to the sewing guild, far exceed his own narrow income. To those who have hearts and brains to understand the more refined needs of a minority of the poor, she can point out families where, although the children are supplied with the necessaries and decencies of life, their pleasures are few, and their parents' fewer still.

In conclusion, that district nurse will best perform her duties, and best use her opportunities, who knows that the highest, the most enduring, part of the work set before her can only be done by one who is not merely a skilled member of her profession, but who sees life clearly and sees it whole. To find and to choose such women is the duty of all those who wish to extend the system of District Nursing throughout the entire kingdom.

With regard to all efforts to improve the condition of the poor, we should do well to recollect a passage in Wilhelm Meister: 'Our sacrifices are rarely of an active kind; we, as it were, abandon what we give away. It is not from resolution, but from despair, that we renounce our property.' The greatest sacrifice that we can make for the poor, and the most useful
one, is that of patient, personal teaching, and especially of those who, from early poverty, neglect, or childish rebellion, have remained at a level unworthy of their natural abilities. Teaching is the truest form of charity, whether we give instruction that is of immediate use to our pupils, or whether we try to exercise and expand their minds so that they may have a definite object in view and apply themselves intelligently to the problems of their daily lives. 'The slowest who does not lose sight of his goal will always outstrip him who wanders aimlessly' — and still more him who waits passively, thinking that the good things of this world will some day reach him, and that if not he will be fully compensated in a future existence. Even an enlightened selfishness would bring us into active agreement with Spencer that, 'The improvement of others, physically, intellectually, and morally, personally concerns each; since their imperfections tell in raising the cost of all the commodities he buys, in increasing the rates and taxes he pays, and in the losses of time, trouble, and money daily brought on him by others' carelessness, stupidity, or unconscientiousness.'

It would be a wholesome lesson for most of us if throughout one single day we set ourselves to observe how large a proportion of the workers we meet are solely engaged in trying to protect us from our fellow-subjects' ignorance, greed, or dishonesty. Even this gives but a faint idea of the national loss arising from incompetence and low moral standards, for even the poorest, the least suspicious, or the most careless among us, gives a considerable fraction of every day of his life to the protection of his property. As an example of an improvement that has been made, and
as a hopeful possibility in other directions, one need only recall the general methods of old-fashioned housekeepers, and thus realise the burden that has been removed by the increased honesty and general respectability of domestic servants.
IX

THE SOCIAL SERVICES OF THE DISTRICT NURSE

At the present moment various schemes for supplying the sick poor with nurses in their own homes are being prosecuted with great vigour, and many people of influence are suddenly called on to decide questions as to the choice and training of these women, who, nevertheless, have but small understanding of the nature and extent of the services to be performed, and incline to the belief that all that is needed is homely, respectable persons with a little knowledge of nursing.' Some time ago a lady wrote to me:

'In this remote, very poor, wholly agricultural district, we are starting village nurses. Each nurse must take maternity as well as general (non-infectious) cases. It is proposed that she should be resident in the cottage, which means that she is to take the entire management of the family life, doing everything except the family washing, besides her own special duties. Personally the idea seems to me wrong. My experience is that the woman always makes arrangements for the household to be carried on during her illness, and also that frequently the husband is a most efficient and capable nurse for her at night.'
The first questions that arise in the mind of an experienced district nurse with regard to such a system are:

Would properly trained women accept these conditions of work? If so, could they possibly be kept in a state of physical, moral, and mental efficiency in such circumstances?

Is it an economical plan? Would the system be acceptable to the poor, and would they benefit by it?

I do not for one moment believe that highly trained women (members of religious orders, perhaps, excepted) would undertake the work of resident cottage nurses as briefly described in the above letter, nor that inferior nurses in such a position could be of the smallest real use. With regard to the latter point, the rich must try and realise that they are not called on to help the poor in times of illness because there is a scarcity of labour. It is folly to speak of our patients as if any considerable percentage of them were isolated persons, and as if family ties, self-sacrificing friendship, and neighbourly charity were unknown. In nearly every house one finds an abundance of labour. What is wanted in the homes of the working-classes is not a respectable charwoman with a three months' veneer of training, but a highly skilled nurse who, strictly confining her personal service to the more difficult parts of her own profession, organises and directs the labour of the patients' friends.

The nurse who spends her time and strength on rough housework is doing one of three things, all undesirable; she is either taking the relatives' proper place, bearing their burden, and undermining their sense of responsibility; or she is depriving some uneducated woman of her only means of earning a little
money without neglecting her own home; or she is preventing neighbours from showing the only form of active charity that they can afford. The object of district nursing is the completion of family and neighbourly life, therefore its keynote must be cooperation, and one of its leading principles the organisation of the willing workers to be found in, or near, almost every household.

Looking back on the nurses and probationers with whom I have come in contact, I am struck by the large proportion of those who seemed to have no conception of this truth, who wished to work as isolated units, who 'did everything' (!) for their patients, taught nothing to their patients' friends, did not know the very names of the Relieving Officer, the Sanitary Inspector, or the 'Cruelty man,' and who never exchanged the smallest courtesy with district visitor or church sister.

The individualist nurse is often a person of good abilities and wide professional knowledge, but she fails even in her duty to the patients themselves. Not long ago I watched a woman of this type attending a case of typhoid, which she visited twice daily. There were two, often three, capable and willing relatives in the house, but they were invariably shut out of the sick-room the whole time she was there, and left unoccupied in the kitchen while, for want of a second pair of hands, the nurse walked round and round the bed, until the sufferer must have felt mad with impatience; she even filled up all the water-jugs, carrying the cans herself, and left the house after two hours' unnecessarily exhausting work convinced that she had 'done everything.'

What did she imagine became of the patient during
the night and the rest of the day? A district nurse who understands her work as a whole, mentally reviews the patient's entire twenty-four hours, foresees every need, and by teaching the friends and relatives, advising them and planning out the work, tries to ensure that the invalid shall be as well cared for as if she had two skilled nurses always at hand, with the great additional advantage of receiving most of her tendance from the persons she knows and loves and is 'used to.' If the nurse cannot or will not co-operate and organise, the patient is not benefited by her visits nearly as much as she might be; it is even possible, by the time the nurse has offended half a dozen obliging neighbours by declining their assistance, and discouraged the relatives, and shattered their self-confidence, it is even possible that the patient may be in a worse position than if the nurse had never entered the house. I have often been told that the first thing a nurse must do is to 'make breathing room' by clearing the house of idle, gossiping neighbours. I never did it in any other way than by making them understand that those who remained, remained to learn and to work. As a rule, they lacked nothing but technical knowledge.

It is plainly demonstrable that such a nurse fails in her duty all round. She has received a varied and complete professional education, chiefly at the public expense, she is capable of undertaking the most difficult medical and surgical work, she is costing the community close on £100 a year, and how does she spend seven-tenths of her working hours? Carrying water, sweeping rooms, lifting heavy weights, and performing the simplest and most elementary nursing routine. If she had left the housework to the persons whose
duty it was to do it, and if she had taught the relatives and friends all the easy and straightforward attendance needed by their respective invalids, she would have been doing less harm to her own mind and body, leaving the greater part of the time free for the more difficult parts of her profession, and benefiting the neighbourhood as a whole to a far larger extent.

Such a nurse as I have described forgets that she herself is human, and will weary of doing the whole drudgery of every case in succession every day of the week; but it is hard for the unlucky Superintendent to forget how often she receives a private and urgent request to 'change my district'—although until this moment to have to visit another nurse's patients was a vexation, and for another nurse even to throw a glance at hers was an insult—'because I am so tired of going to A Street and B Lane, and that old man Tucker makes so much work, and his wife never does anything for him now, and the sister and niece who used to come and help have quite given it up. I wonder why? ' I have often told her why, and I tell her once more.

In addition to weakening family ties, such a nurse is unfitting herself for her own special duties. It is absolutely impossible to combine skilled nursing with scouring, scrubbing, boot-cleaning and grate-polishing. Consider the effect upon her hands alone; the poorest patients shrink disgustedly from roughened hands, while the minor surgery that forms so large a part of the modern nurse's duties can only be performed satisfactorily by those whose hands are soft and supple, sensitive to the lightest impression; and to the nurse herself any injury to the nails, or breaking of the skin, is a source of serious danger. It must also
be remembered that the nurse is as a rule of a different social class from that of her patients and their friends, and has developed different powers of mind and body. The average district nurse could keep awake longer, could resist infectious diseases better, and bear more continuous strain of mind than the persons she is serving; but she has not the kind of strength which enables a woman to stand all day at the wash-tub, and then turn-to and economise soap by scrubbing out the kitchen with the suds. I have rarely seen any poor woman, however suffering and broken, who could not do heavier physical work than a woman of the middle-classes in her ordinary state of health.

To return to the resident cottage nurse: if the patient really required much attention at night, it would be sheer cruelty to expect the nurse to give it, and then spend the entire day in nursing, housework, cooking, and the ungrateful task of managing other people's children while within hearing of their parents. If, on the other hand, the patient does not require it, why is the nurse there, intruding where she is not wanted, living in miserable discomfort, and taking up air and space where there are none to spare?

In my opinion, too much is always made of the night-nursing difficulty. Unless in great pain, and in that case soothing draughts and opiates would be given by the doctor, most patients sleep about seven hours, and many far longer. In maternity cases—and working women between twenty-two and forty-six are rarely confined to bed from any other cause—the patient seldom needs any attention in the night except to be given refreshment about two A.M. and again about six A.M. It may be considered hard to throw this work upon the breadwinner, but it must
be remembered that a man needs less sleep than a woman, can better bear to have his rest broken, and can more easily make up for it in the daytime or early evening. In addition, to wait upon their wives is no new or unwelcome burden. Among the civilised and stationary members of the working-classes (not always the most highly paid) it is taken for granted that men are to assist largely in the night nursing of wife and children, but I was rather surprised by an incident which recently came under my notice. Two branches of a London family who had been living in separate flats decided to take a house together. I thought that economy was the object, but found that the rent would be practically the same. Being an acquaintance of twenty years’ standing, I ventured to ask the reason, and was told, ‘So ’s Jim can attend to father, nights. He ’s been having bad turns again.’ Jim is the son-in-law, and the father, although able to work, has a distressing complaint which at times makes him totally dependent upon others.

I do not deny that there are men in whom the sight of a suffering wife arouses a brutal instinct of destruction, and women are never in so much danger from them as when they are utterly incapable of self-defence or of flight. I recollect waiting hour after hour until long past midnight with a woman who had been ill for many months with cancer, but had only recently been obliged to give in and take to her bed, and who was convinced that when her husband returned he would ‘do her a mischief.’ The man came in fairly sober and fell asleep on the settle in the kitchen, and I left, scarcely knowing how much to attribute to the nervous fears of her suffering condition and how much to reality. Two days later
there were marks of ill-treatment on her face and shoulder, and within a week she was dead. I could supply instances of a similar nature; nevertheless, it would be infinitely cheaper, as well as more moral, to accommodate the few hundreds of such men in prison rather than provide the wives of several millions with resident nurses. In all probability some such men will always exist, for they are to be found in the highest ranks of society; wealth and civilisation do little but reduce their temptations to this form of brutality, and do not invariably alter even its method of expression.

One of the most important points in the preservation of the nurse’s general health, and in preventing her from receiving or conveying infection, is a careful toilet, an ample supply of hot water, and the possibility of immediately changing and disinfecting her clothing when needful. One of her most powerful means of favourably impressing her patients, and of exerting moral influence, is by exquisite personal neatness; the invalids and their friends note everything, from the polish of her shoes to the set of her white bonnet strings. Under the conditions of life which she must endure as an intruder in a cottage, how can this state of things be maintained? How could the strictest superintendent, or the most exacting member of a committee, dare to censure, or even to criticise, the appearance of a nurse who had done the roughest housework with the roughest appliances, had slept on two chairs, or shared the patient’s bed, had kept her clothes in a bundle, and had scarcely had standing room to dress?

When it is once realised that superior nurses would not undertake the work of resident cottage nursing,
and that if they did their efficiency could not be maintained, the system stands self-condemned. It is worse than useless to give to the poor, nurses who would be rejected with disdain and disgust by the rich; it is cruel, and may in extreme cases be little short of murderous. The poor need better nurses than the rich, not worse, and for the following irrefutable reasons:

1. When the poor own to being ill they are generally very ill; their acknowledged illness frequently begins in the middle of its real course, often sadly near the end, and in the majority of cases complications have supervened which, humanly speaking, would not have occurred if doctor and nurse had received a more timely summons. Also, although much muscular strength is found among the poor, really sound constitutions are rare.

2. Every day's illness is, in proportion to their means, a far heavier loss to the poor than to the rich, and therefore the neglect or mismanagement of the case by a partially trained nurse is to be deprecated still more earnestly.

3. The doctor is in much less frequent attendance, and is accustomed to rely upon the nurse and use her as his lieutenant to an extent unnecessary in hospitals and unknown in well-to-do households, where, in cases of serious illness, the medical man calls every day and even twice and three times a day.

4. The most highly skilled surgical nurses are especially necessary on account of the severe chronic cases (due very often to the lack of proper advice until the time for successful operation has passed), and to the serious domestic accidents which are relatively, as well as actually, so much commoner among the poor than among the rich.
Another question arises:—Are the resident nurses to be of a superior class to their patients? If so, how will they be able to endure the bad accommodation, and how will the patients' pride suffer the constant presence of 'a person as is used, by what I can make out, to havin' things very different'? If, on the other hand, she is of precisely the same class, all kinds of social difficulties will arise, more especially when the invalid is the wife and mother. No one can deny that jealousy, quarrelling, backbiting, and slander are more frequent among the poor than among the liberally educated, and blaze up strongly on the smallest provocation.

My experience in district work leads me to believe that, while working-class women are generally grateful for the attendance of a visiting nurse, more especially if of a class so distinct from their own that they have no fear of her gossiping about their affairs, they can always manage to get their housework done, and greatly dislike having their domestic management interfered with. I have scarcely ever seen a mother so ill that she did not know what the children had had for dinner, and whether the husband had gone late to his work, and how soon it would be necessary to buy coal and oil. A woman with twelve living children, eight boys and four girls, once boasted in my hearing, 'I've never had another woman inside my doors, not since I was married.'

Then there is the question of diet. Is the nurse to bring her own food and cook it separately, or is she to share the family meals? To the rich, perhaps, the second plan seems the only practicable one; to the poor, the first would seem more reasonable and more tolerable. They could understand a kind of
lodger, with her own loaf and butter and tea and weekly joint, but not an alien eating their food (as the mother would probably express it) 'without no thought!' Again, would the average cottage diet be nourishing enough for the nurse with the treble strain of physical and mental work done under unwholesome conditions? The whole matter bristles with practical difficulties.

To turn to the supposed economy of the system:—The nurse, having borne the cost of three to six months' training instead of three years, can, of course, accept a lower salary, and she will, as a rule, be resident with her patients; but a lodging must be kept for her where she can go in the intervals, and where she can keep her clothes and personal belongings. While in lodgings she must be fed, and I am convinced that when at work it would be found necessary to make her an allowance for board. Even if we imagine that all this can be done for half the cost of a fully trained visiting nurse, would that be enough to prove the economy of the system? Before we can arrive at a just conclusion, we must compare not only the cost, but the amount of work done in return for the outlay.

How many cases could a resident nurse undertake in the course of the year? Suppose that, on an average, each case lasted a fortnight (a very short time for illnesses considered severe enough to require nursing night and day), and allowing a few days' rest occasionally to recover from the intolerable strain, she could not take more than twenty-two per annum. A well-trained, non-resident nurse could pay, on an average, ten visits a day; allowing for double, and occasionally treble visits paid daily to the same per-
son, while other patients would require only the same number in a week, she could give all the skilled attendance that was required by seven or eight cases every day. At the end of the year it would be found that although she had cost twice as much, she had accomplished about five times the work of the resident nurse, and had done it without the fatal drawbacks of impairing her own health and efficiency, of weakening the family ties of her patients, of running counter to their ideas of propriety, and of discouraging all neighbourliness and sense of social responsibility.

When only one, or at the most two, patients are to be attended concurrently, who is to decide which case most urgently needs the nurse’s care? What is the ‘local habitation and the name’ of those villages where disease shows the courtesy of keeping his victims’ names on an invisible roster, taking them one by one in orderly and convenient succession?

Furthermore, it is not acute illness, lasting at the outside a few weeks, which is such an intolerable drain upon the resources of the poor. It is, on the contrary, the severe chronic cases that most need help, and how could the resident system possibly be applied to them? Again, prevention of disease should form a large part of the nurse’s duty; the more houses into which she can obtain a welcome entry, even if it be only to attend a whitlow, a cut finger, or an abscess, the better for the furtherance of the cause for which she exists. A district nurse is not merely ‘for the present distress,’ just a modern means of obtaining unearned flannel petticoats; she is, or should be, one of the most powerful modern agencies for the lasting betterment of the condition of the poor.

One of the least irrational objections against visiting
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nurses is the possibility of their spreading infectious diseases. If the nurse were to attend such cases as mumps, measles, and scarlatina, there might be some danger, but it is only in the exceptional event of an epidemic that she is permitted to do so, and her ordinary work is then temporarily abandoned. All other infectious complaints, such as diphtheria, typhoid, consumption, erysipelas, etc., can, with the exercise of a little care, be attended by her without the smallest risk of spreading infection.

So far from providing resident nurses for the poor, I should like to see the system of visiting nurses (at a fixed charge) more generally extended among the fairly well-to-do. Very often all but the work that could be and ought to be done by relatives and servants would not take more than an hour a day, and it would be a sensible economy to pay at a much higher rate for that period instead of engaging the nurse's whole time.

In large towns the district nurse rarely, if ever, has to ask herself, 'What shall I do?' Self-questioning rather takes the form of 'It is impossible for me to do all the work that I plainly see before me; what will it be best for me to leave undone, unattempted?' But in many healthy and fairly well-housed villages, in prosperous small towns, and in those of the larger ones in which she is strictly confined to her own district, it often happens that although for a few months in the year her hours may be long and uncertain, it is difficult for her as a rule to make up a daily average of seven, or even six, hours spent in purely nursing duties. To all of those nurses who take their duties seriously, the problem soon presents itself how best they can use the margin of time which,
strictly speaking, is owing to their committee, and the additional hours that they are always willing to give whenever it seems that they can be spent profitably.

Sunday-schools are frequently so poorly provided with teachers that the thoughts of many nurses must turn instinctively towards that sphere of usefulness, but for cogent reasons it is undesirable that the nurse should expend her energies in that direction. In the first place, because even the most leisured woman in her position has already quite enough to do on Sunday, and, except for these works of necessity to the sick, the day ought to be kept for rest, and for mental and spiritual refreshment; secondly, because she belongs to a strictly non-sectarian association, and if she becomes closely identified with either church or chapel Sunday-school, there is great fear that one portion of the parishioners will imagine that they have a stronger claim upon her, while others will hesitate to ask for her services, thinking that their claim is less; and thirdly, because of the extreme uncertainty as to whether on any given Sunday it will be possible for her to leave her patients. The same objections apply with equal force against the nurse's having anything to do with organ or choir.

After even the briefest consideration of the circumstances, it can scarcely be denied that the nurse's first duty during periods of comparative slackness of work is towards her chronic patients. The more respectable a neighbourhood is, the more likely they are to abound; for men and women who in bad or neglected surroundings must either have died or been removed to the workhouse infirmary, linger half a lifetime in a decent cottage home. Their days are chiefly filled up by aches and pains, hardship and dull
submission, with occasionally an acute attack of despondency, while the relatives lead a life of hard, monotonous, almost ceaseless work. Could the nurse's spare time possibly be spent to better effect than in trying to improve the lot, both of the sufferers and their relatives? I have known instances where the devotion of a wife, mother, sister, or daughter has been so constant, and the needs of the sufferer so great, that for years at a time the attendant has been as strictly confined to the four walls of the dwelling as the patient to his bed; necessary errands have been done by a neighbour's child, and all thought of personal health or recreation has been continuously set on one side. And although there are many exceptions, these patients are as a rule absolutely devoid of any consideration for their relatives, or any sense of gratitude towards them. It is often painfully embarrassing to receive fervent thanks for comparatively small services, and at the same time to observe that the hard, every-day washing, scrubbing, and drudging of the patient's wife or mother (and occasionally husband) is accepted as a matter of course, as a poorly performed duty.

In very poor households I always recommend that the chronic invalid, unless suffering from infectious disease, and if not in sufficient pain to be rendered irritable and morose, should share the living-room of the family. It must be remembered that many bedridden persons, so far from being elderly people gradually inured to loneliness, are young boys and girls and even children, and they ought as far as possible to continue to share family life, family interests, and even family troubles. Moreover, where there is poverty, or even narrowness of means, this arrange-
ment entails a great saving of fire and light, and reduces the fatigue of nursing attendance. Even if the house is on only two floors, the stairs are often so bad that the exertion of carrying things up and down is exhausting and dangerous.

In cases where the relatives are on the borderland of morality as well as poverty, this arrangement also secures the necessary publicity. A few years ago in my district there was a house, the bright, pleasant, well-furnished kitchen of which I had often noted as I passed. Unknown to the neighbours, unknown to a clergyman who regularly visited the house, a terribly neglected girl of fourteen was lying in a bedroom overhead. One day her sufferings were greater than usual, and she screamed while he was in the kitchen. The relatives offered some plausible explanation, but he came to me at once. ‘They are hiding something there. If they will not let you in, I must inform the police.’ The girl’s condition will not bear description; a few days later she was removed to the workhouse infirmary, where she must spend the rest of her days.

Poverty alone is seldom a sufficient reason for removing a chronic invalid, for comfort is not so much a matter of money as of thought and contrivance applied to a special end. Many expensively furnished rooms are utterly comfortless, though their failings in this respect may escape notice until illness occurs; and on the other hand, many an invalid lying in a room, the entire furniture of which may have cost ten pounds, and certainly would not sell for thirty shillings, may have all that is necessary for comfort, alleviation and mental satisfaction.

Next to the chronic patients, the persons having
most claim upon the nurse’s spare hours are those who, although not actually ill, are suffering from the growing weakness and frequent ailments of old age. Most people would say that the children should rank next, but in nearly all the houses in which I have worked the inmates were sufficiently civilised to do their utmost for their children, while only an elect minority show the constant respect and gentle consideration of which old age stands in such need. The acute illness of an aged father or mother will, needless to say, arouse the latent tenderness to be found in all but the most callous. I am referring to the long years of indifferent health which often have to be lived through by persons above the age of seventy, or seventy-five. An occasional visit to these old people will be a real gratification to them, a silent reminder to their children, and an example (often sorely needed!) to their grandchildren. The nurse must not imagine, however, that every old person who makes bitter complaints to her is in an unkind, or even unsympathetic environment. A certain amount of captiousness and fault-finding is natural to uneducated old people; what should rouse suspicion of unkindness is reticence, timidity and despondency.

Next to the aged, the nurse should turn her thoughts to the young girls between thirteen and twenty, more especially those who have not the restraint of domestic service, but are living at home without any semblance of discipline. It is seldom difficult for a woman of gentle manners to win these young girls’ confidence, and she can sometimes reinforce the mothers at a time when those much-tried persons are in sad need of help. They have often let the girls get completely
out of hand, and although they generally recover their influence later on, in the meantime irreparable mischief may have been done. Old-fashioned methods of upbringing still linger in the provinces, and when a girl is too old to receive slaps submissively, and even past being intimidated by the threat—happily never carried out: 'If you haven't any more sense than that, I'll get your father to give you a thrashing,' mothers are frequently at their wits' end to know how to control her until she acquires the 'sense' which seems so late in developing.

It is sometimes suggested that the district nurse should start girls' clubs; but the same objections apply to this as to her teaching in the Sunday-school or helping with the choir. In addition, it should be more her desire to teach them how to be useful and happy at home than to enjoy themselves elsewhere, and to do this she must deal with them as individuals, not as a class, and encourage them to look upon her as a personal and even a partial friend. Where these clubs already exist, however, and are under prudent management, the nurse should be willing, when time permits, to give instruction in nursing or any kindred subject. Boys' clubs are open to fewer objections than girls' clubs, and as they often languish and die away for want of a little varied and practical assistance, it may be well for the nurse to lend a helping hand when she can do so.

All opportunities of addressing mothers' meetings, or any lecturing work of that nature, should be willingly accepted; a nurse can often say to twenty or thirty mothers things that she could hardly venture to say to the two or three who most need instruction, and this impersonal method of teaching sometimes suc-
ceeds where all direct admonition would fail. In addition, as mothers are usually allowed to bring their youngest child with them, it gives her many opportunities of seeing young children who might not otherwise come under her notice. Special attention should be given to those women who are acting as midwives, and who wish to qualify themselves under the recent regulations; a little elementary teaching of the theory of midwifery is often an invaluable assistance and encouragement in their endeavours.

The free-will offerings of the district nurse may, and should, vary almost endlessly. 'Thou knowest not whether shall prosper either this or that; or whether they both shall be alike good,' but in some such order as this they will be found to range themselves.
Long before I began nursing, I was taught that the necessary laws of thought are the law of identity, the law of non-contradiction, and the law of excluded middle. As a whole I have found my patients and their friends strangely free from these clogs to fancy, and especially from the second of them. One of the greatest difficulties in dealing with the poorest and most uneducated has always been, that although they believed what I told them, they also believed the exact opposite when it was told them by some one else. They did not seem to realise that the two statements were in direct opposition, and that of contradictories both cannot be true. They are often fully as credulous as a little friend of nine years old whom I met with her nurse on the way home from the dentist. She ran up to me, and opening a screw of paper showed me the tooth which had just been extracted, and told me delightedly: 'I'm going to put it into a glass of water, and by to-morrow morning it will turn into half-a-crown.' I did not imagine that a clever child living almost entirely with grown-up people could really believe such a fable, and said, 'But you know that is quite impossible.' 'Is it?' 'Quite.' She thought for a moment and then said
with polite decision, 'Of course I believe whatever you tell me, but I believe mamma too.'

I had a patient who had upset a saucepan of greasy water over her feet. She did not consult me until the fifth day after the accident, by which time the wounds were in a deplorable condition. She told me some of the many things that she had done to them by the neighbours' advice: held them to the fire to 'draw out the burn,' soaked them in strong soda water, plastered them with dirty whitening, etc. There was considerable danger of blood-poisoning, and I said, 'Really, you are such a kind and yielding woman that if I suggest cutting your feet off, you will hardly have the heart to say no.' I professed the most acute trade jealousy, and succeeded in extracting a solemn promise that there should be no rival treatment, and in a short time she was entirely cured.

In her intercourse with the totally uneducated, except in hopeless cases of illness, the district nurse cannot safely allow the alleviation of pain to take a too prominent and overshadowing position among her duties. Instead of regarding pain as a symptom of disease, her patients hold that it is the disease itself. Directly pain is reduced, they relax all care, and if it should disappear for a few hours they consider themselves cured. On the other hand, any increase of pain, however slight, is held as ample proof that the treatment is wrong and must be discontinued. It is this confusion of ideas which makes the ignorant such an easy and valuable prey to the vendors of cough mixtures, soothing syrups, and 'pain killers' of every description.

Out of nothing, nothing comes. The uneducated partly accept this proverb, as they do not seem to
think that an event can be entirely causeless, but with them a mouse may as easily bring forth a mountain, as a mountain a mouse. A vegetarian, one of the peculiar stamp that would as soon fraternise with a butcher as with a baker, and who lived entirely on dried fruits and tinned milk, had a bad attack of influenza. He did not dream of attributing it to the fact that he had, while hungry and tired, visited a friend suffering from the complaint. He assured me solemnly that his illness had been caused by eating some days previously, 'out of politeness, and not to give offence,' a single mouthful of a child's birthday cake, the only deleterious ingredient of which, from his point of view, was a teaspoonful of flour.

The poorest classes never seem to look upon any matter as definitely settled: a question can always be reopened. I knew an illiterate cook who had been taught breadmaking by an excellent baker, and could do the work thoroughly well. She went to live with a lady who liked home-made bread and enjoyed the results of her skill. A fortnight later the bread became almost uneatable—the servant next door had been consulted and her opinions accepted. The mistress remonstrated, and she returned to the baker's plans for a few weeks, and then accepted a suggestion from the charwoman which spoilt two whole batches in succession. Finally her mistress was obliged to dismiss her and seek for a less open-minded person, one who could hold fast sound doctrine. As the Japanese say, 'One cannot stick a nail in a custard.' I had a girl friend so open to advice that she never succeeded in knitting a pair of socks—some difference in size, or proportion, or material had always to be tried on the second one. She carefully put them all
away, though nothing seemed more improbable than that they should ever be finished, while it was difficult to imagine of what use they could be until completed. She became a hospital nurse, and returning home at the end of a year for her holiday, she asked what had become of these treasures. 'What use can they be?' asked a younger sister impatiently. 'Oh, they will do so beautifully for my poor one-legged men.'

This lack of firmness must arise from want of early training of the reasoning powers. An officer who had been trying to instruct full-grown men in why's and wherefore's said to me, 'People say, practice first and theory after, and it sounds reasonable because, as a matter of time, practice must have come before theory. Nevertheless, the theory was there, and if you know it there is an enormous advantage in teaching it first. The fact is, that when men have once got into the habit of doing things without understanding them, you can't make them take any interest in theory, and unless they grasp the principles on which they are acting, how is any real advance to be made?'

Of late years many of my probationers in district nursing have been women educated at Council Schools, and to my deep disappointment I have found that, so far from seeking to know the reason of any treatment prescribed, or of any rules given for their guidance, they did not even wish to hear it when it was presented freely to them. The words of one expressed the mind of most: 'I only want to know what to do.' It was vain to protest that nursing could not possibly be reduced to unvarying routine, and that unless they grasped the principle underlying the rules they could not adapt their knowledge to the changing circumstances of daily life. All instruction intended
to develop their reasoning powers bored, irritated, or depressed them. If this is the attitude of Seventh Standard girls who have worked three years in a first-class hospital, can one be astonished if illiterate men and women of forty and upwards regard medical prescriptions much in the same light as our forefathers regarded spells and incantations? One was all very well until a more powerful one was uttered, and what half-way house was there between blind faith and personal experiment? Council School teachers may reasonably reply to this criticism of their pupils with the retort that if parents, who receive their children one at a time, and who rarely have more than five or six of them in the house at once, would accept a few of their parental responsibilities and teach obedience, order, punctuality, and cleanliness, they themselves, compelled to deal with ten times the number simultaneously, would be less handicapped in their endeavours to develop reason. The child whose formal education is to terminate at fourteen, has already been allowed to waste an unconscionable amount of time if at five years of age he cannot do as he is told, at seven cannot wash his own hands and face, and at nine does not know when it is time to start for school.

It has been said that no dog ever acquires a sense of proportion, and that if there is a huge basin of bones, and only himself and a companion to eat them, he is as anxious and hurried as if there were a dozen to be fed. Ordinary servants never seem to possess this sense; if they have been accustomed to cook a large dish of potatoes and fill a large bowl with gravy or sauce for a family of ten, they will do the same when it has been reduced
to three. It is looked on as wilful waste of employers' property, but in their own homes, unless prevented by circumstances, they do very much the same, and this is one of the reasons why sufficient provision is not made for old age. Many years ago an exceptionally intelligent girl of twenty said to me, 'I thought that now there's only the two children at home, mother and father would be able to put by a bit, but they spend just as much as when all six of us were there. They don't have better things, but just the same money goes on bread and meat and everything.' The mother died a few months ago, and the father, who is not yet sixty-three, is bitterly disappointed that there is no immediate prospect of an old age pension. Forewarned by the daughter's complaint, in similar circumstances I have looked to see what would happen, and have nearly always found that her experience held good. The poor are at heart convinced that 'assez n'y a si trop n'y a,' and after the long carefulness entailed by bringing up a family on narrow means, many of them find actual pleasure in mere purposeless waste. If they ate roast sirloin every week, and roast goose every month, I could well excuse them, but the satisfaction of throwing away bread and potatoes every day, and letting the milk become sour and the butter rancid, and leaving the once jealously treasured square of soap in the water, is simply inexplicable.

When there is a large supply of anything, no matter what, imperfectly educated people seem as if impelled to waste and spoil. How socialists propose to deal with this general characteristic I do not know. At present the amount of training required to repress it has never been given in less than three generations,
and even in the fourth or fifth generation it is plainly discernible in nine-tenths of the children and in a by no means negligible proportion of the adults. Many of my chronic surgical patients received their supply of dressings from the workhouse, and to save trouble it was given them in relatively large quantities. Whenever a loose roll of wool, covered with finger marks, was pulled out of a dirty drawer, or kept in the bottom of a cupboard, I knew that it was public property. Sometimes I required in addition a penny-worth of this or that from the chemist, and the same persons would hoard this minute amount with the greatest care, not merely because they had paid for it, but because they could see that a small quantity must soon come to an end, while ten times the amount is infinity itself. I once gave a most extravagant north-country woman two leg bandages for her husband. I pointed out to her that they had been made by some painstaking person out of an old linen tablecloth and carefully joined together with fine white sewing silk, and that they were better than any she could buy because they were at once firm and light. I also warned her that my cupboard was full of emptiness, and that these were the first and last that I could give her. Those bandages were washed and worn alternately every day for six months. The woman was perfectly satisfied, and always had the clean bandage ironed and dry and firmly rolled ready for me to apply, but if any one would have given her seven bandages a week, she would have accepted them without hesitation, and put the soiled ones in the dust-bin. Not being a socialist, what else could one expect?

It is difficult for any person to keep a firm hold on
the essentials of life, but the uncultured seem to find it impossible. I knew a delicate growing girl employed, and highly paid, by a lady who took a great interest in her, never allowed her to be overstrained in any way, let her go to bed at nine o’clock, and in fine weather sent her for a walk three or four times a week in the afternoon, without cutting short the usual ‘evenings out.’ The mother acknowledged, when it was pointed out to her, how greatly the girl’s health and appearance had improved, but during the two years that the engagement lasted I never heard her express the smallest appreciation of the mistress’s kind and generous care of her daughter; all she said was, ‘Kate’s fond of fancy-work, so it soots her. She don’t mind stoppin’ there.’ The girl left, and went to live with employers who expected her to be in the kitchen at five-forty-five every morning without fail, who never allowed her to go to bed until ten-forty-five, and at least two nights a week kept her up until after twelve, and confined her ‘outings’ strictly to the regular evening. All this was perfectly well known to the mother. After a few weeks I asked her how her daughter was getting on, and received an enthusiastic reply: ‘Splendid, thank you, m’m. Her missis has give her a new hat and sev’ril other things, so she must be very kind, I ’m sure.’

As an experienced mistress once said to me, ‘We must give our servants good bedrooms and healthy kitchens, and proper food and reasonable hours, but it is idle to think that they will appreciate our care. Our only reward will be a good conscience and a small doctor’s bill. And of course it is just within the bounds of possibility that we may, by a hair’s-breadth, permanently raise their standard of comfort and
health.' A phrase constantly repeated by many poor women, 'I don't know what health is,' is in only too many cases literally true.

The poor, like children, seem only to be impressed by the exceptional, and take little count of the ordinary course of affairs. One day I was trying to give a lesson in poultry-keeping to three or four people who annually wasted an uncertain amount of time and money in that direction. I showed them the fowl-houses, coops, etc., and some extremely fine broods. There were about eighty young birds all in perfect condition, except one which had been slightly injured by catching its foot in a trap-door. That bird appeared to be all that my unwilling pupils could see, and when I met them again, fully a year afterwards, they inquired immediately for 'the pore cripple.'

The future and its needs, even the tolerably certain future of the day after to-morrow, still holds a small and inconsiderable place in the calculations of the poorest classes. I have had large experience among naval and military pensioners and their families. In many ways they are most superior people, and even if never accustomed to deal with larger sums of money than the majority of those who will claim old age pensions, they have at least been encouraged all through their service life to look far ahead, and to realise that their future comfort was to depend upon their present conduct. Nevertheless, most of those with whom I came in contact were always in arrears. Nearly the whole of the quarter's pay had to be spent the day it was drawn. No greater kindness could be shown to these men as a class than to pay their pensions weekly. It may be objected that I only
entered these pensioners' houses when there was illness, but bad health is never far from persons above seventy years of age.

I once lived in a town where wages were paid fortnightly. The system exactly halved the number of days on which the ordinary man thought it permissible to drink too much beer, but it almost entirely abolished strict ready-money dealings. If a child was sent to buy a pound of sugar and a couple of ounces of tea, instead of the necessary pence she carried a book in which the purchase was entered, and of course the tradespeople showed a civil preference for customers deprived of the right of criticism by never being able to entirely wipe off the fortnight's claims. A former servant of mine, a most determined young woman, who believed in locks and keys and ready money and kept her own accounts, went into a shop which I believed to be most respectable, and had, in fact, recommended to her. She told me that after she had bought all she wanted, she was worried to buy more, and when she replied with brusque good-humour, 'That's all the money I have!' the instant reply was, 'Then do let me book you something.' In spite of her whispered protests, a girl-wife who accompanied her, whose husband was earning seventeen shillings a week, was induced to take a box of fancy biscuits on these terms. How far up the trade-habits encouraged by the system of constant indebtedness may reach, it is impossible to say. I went one day into a dairy-produce shop which regularly supplied a thousand 'villa residences.' Owing to some oversight, my bill had been left unpaid for several weeks in succession, but it only amounted to eighteen shillings. I put down a sovereign, and the woman
astounded me by saying in hesitating tones, ‘Do you wish me to take for it all?’

I find that the poor are, as a rule, extremely un-observant, and they affect to be so even more than they are, because ‘not to take no notice’ appears to be a point of good manners. A district nurse might, in the average cottage, go through the same simple piece of routine twenty or thirty times, and none of the dwellers in the house would be any the wiser for it. Direct teaching and practical instruction are the only things that seem to penetrate their minds and shake them from mental apathy and sluggishness. They can learn, but left to themselves show no desire to do so. Many of my Council School probationers were not much further advanced as far as voluntary exertion of mind was concerned, but they had acquired a touching faith in the efficacy of long-worded lectures listened to in complete passivity. The idea that a person’s knowledge is more in proportion to her desire and determination to learn than to the formal opportunities offered, was always an unwelcome doctrine. An ardent missioner, a most successful worker among boys and girls of a difficult age, told me, ‘It is no use being satisfied if they will sit still while you talk. I always make them do something. They don’t like it at first—it seems to me it’s a lot easier for young people to sit still than it used to be—but action makes far more impression on them in the end.’

When brought much into contact with the children of the poor, especially those between twelve and eighteen, and observing the grievous waste of time and opportunity caused by the lack of home discipline, one understands the faith that is felt by many people in more artificial systems of education; but one of
the most disappointing parts of institutional and naval and military training is that the desirable points are seldom as lastingly impressed upon the pupils as the undesirable. An officer who took a considerable interest in the men with whom he had been brought into contact, and often met them on shore after their discharge, told me, 'Two months after they leave, you simply wouldn't know them. Twenty or more years of compulsory washing, dressing and orderliness slip away from them like a nightmare. It hasn't altered their voluntary habits.' I have received much testimony of a similar nature, and it makes one heavily discount the supposed advantages of universal military service. When told how smart and orderly and obedient the children are who have been brought up in certain institutions, I think of a characteristic incident which occurred some years ago. A young relative who had recently joined the London Rifle Brigade asked me to help him fold up his overcoat. He produced a book with diagrams and instructions, and we succeeded in getting the garment into a lump of the right width and length, but it was, and persisted in remaining, twice the regulation thickness. Some weeks later I asked him how the problem had finally been solved, and he replied, 'I went to a sergeant in the regulars, and he said, "Damp it thoroughly and sit on it."' 'But what does it look like when it is unfolded?' 'Oh, they're such an infernal nuisance that when they're once folded up properly we never undo them again.' 'Not even when it rains heavily?' 'Not if it rains marling spikes.'

Perhaps the greatest moral difficulty of all institutions is that many things, utterly harmless in family life, or in any small household, have to be forbidden
under penalty when large numbers reside in one building. The child who is punished for talking on the stairs, punished for fastening his necktie in a knot instead of a bow, punished for touching his knife and fork before the given signal, naturally loses all sense of moral proportion. Or rather, he fails to acquire it, for all children are apt to make the measure of anger their offence causes the measure of its guilt. In private life this is generally a good guide, but not always. ‘Mother keeps a cane,’ I was told by an intelligent girl of ten or eleven. ‘When does she use it?’ ‘When I’m bad.’ ‘When are you bad?’ ‘When I breaks a plate.’

I have found it intensely difficult to make narrowly educated hospital nurses recognise the many necessary differences between nursing the poor in large institutions and nursing them in their own homes. They have been trained, for example, to keep the beds in the most precise external order, the castors must all turn the same way, and so must the buttoned side of the pillow-cases. This comes to be a matter of such overshadowing importance that I have known excellent women who, even when a patient was plainly dying, had no eyes except to see whether these regulations had been kept. One cannot deny that twenty beds in one room arranged, or disarranged, to suit the fancies of twenty undisciplined patients would have an effect of disorder, and even squalor, from which all would suffer, but it needed much persuasion to induce the district probationers to believe that it was not necessary to harass a single patient lying in her own house by perpetually straightening the bed-clothes, and, as one poor sufferer irritably expressed it, ‘laying a body out afore she’s dead.’ That
circumstances alter cases seems a mere truism, but it has no useful meaning for the imperfectly educated. Late one chilly autumn afternoon in the north of England I was stopped by a respectably-dressed woman who told me that the baby she held in her arms was ill. 'Doctor said I was to put a poultice on his chest this morning, and I did, but it don't seem to ha' done him any good.' 'The child ought not to be out of doors, especially after a hot poultice has just been removed.' 'He's got it on now, nurse!' she exclaimed in self-justificatory tones. On examination I found that a stone-cold poultice was loosely adhering to the unlucky infant's stomach and legs.

The least intellectual portion of the working-classes believe that their sufferings arise from unalterable destiny; the second stage is to believe that they proceed entirely from the wicked or ignorant acts of their fellow-men; the next is to maintain that man is man, and master of his fate; only a minority perceive that there is some truth in all these conceptions, and most of all in the third. I knew a rural postman who had not even reached the second stage. For many years this was his daily life:—Early in the morning he walked from the village where he lived to a small town four miles away, carrying letters and parcels up to 56 lbs. in weight, and returning with possibly the same burden. There was no house to house delivery, and he then sat at a plank table in the yard of the public-house until it was time for him to repeat the journey. After that, stupid with fatigue, he returned to the plank table until nine o'clock, when he went to bed. He walked sixteen miles every week day and eight on Sunday along a flat, exposed, lonely, utterly uninteresting road, white
with dust in summer and thick with mud in the winter. He received 16s. a week, which was 2s. above the village average. He was unmarried, and was less than thirty years of age when he began the work, and there was not the smallest reason why he should not have had a bicycle. He would not even have been obliged to save the money beforehand, as a man in his position could easily have obtained one on the hire system. Just for the want of a fruitful grain of discontent, he continued to lead a dog's life year after year. Ultimately he was succeeded by a man who did the work in less than half the time, and with so little fatigue that he carried on a profitable trade in his leisure hours. In another district even longer journeys are nominally performed on foot by a delicate elderly man. He satisfies the demands of red tape by walking well out of sight of the post-office to a spot where his daughter meets him with a pony-cart, and the two together, in half a day's easy work, earn a comfortable living. Before reaching the next post-office he again descends and carries the load of letters and parcels. Incidentally it may be remarked that the post-office authorities are by no means over-solicitous as to the comfort of rural postmen, nor even anxious to shield them from pressing temptation. The men often have to wait two or more hours daily in outlying villages without any place of shelter but the public-house.

The people most apprehensive of the future are commonly those who have least to complain of in the present, and therefore it is permissible to hope that improved conditions of labour will almost automatically lead to great advances in thrift and foresight, and these again will place the working-classes as a whole
in a still better position to make fair bargains with their employers. Among favourable conditions of labour one cannot, however, count the free provision of old age pensions. None of those persons who have an intimate acquaintance with the poor in their own homes can deny that, among the classes of labour possessing the lowest standard of life, this latest gift of the State will prove an incalculably great check to thrift and foresight, and will probably assist in sinking the wages of the most ignorant and helpless to a point where saving is doubtful wisdom, and all thought of the future a hopeless torment.

If the prospect of five shillings a week had been presented to people who had not the smallest intention of sinking, even in extreme old age, below a pound-a-week standard, most of them would have regarded it as a pleasant addition to their prospective income, and no whit relaxed their independent efforts. There would have been even greater injustice to the taxpayers, but comparatively small injury to the recipients. Given to persons whose highest standard for old age is to have enough 'to keep out of the House,' this well-meant bounty will weaken their efforts to such a degree that they will be worse off, even from an exclusively monetary point of view, than they were before. The opinions of such persons were well expressed by a countryman in full work, wages equal to about 22s. a week in a town, or 25s. in a great city, and with no children left on his hands. He said at once on hearing of the Bill, 'I've never had parish pay, so I shall get the pension right enough, and I shan't trouble to lay by any more.' Parish pay in that village is commonly 3s. 6d. and a four-pound loaf, therefore the Government bribe is not a heavy
one, though sufficient not only to have a powerful effect, but one quite other than what reasonable and responsible men can desire.

If instead of a pension scheme the Government had devised means for instructing and protecting the inexperienced investor, no one would rejoice more than those who, like myself, have endured the bitter pain of visiting respectable old people robbed of their savings and reduced to the extremest poverty. Some of the saddest cases I have known have been among superior naval and military pensioners, who received from fourteen shillings to a pound a week, and who, knowing that their wife, or the unmarried daughter who had sacrificed her youth to them, would be left unprovided for, have pinched and scraped for years out of their narrow incomes, and then have died in the full consciousness that their dependants were penniless.

In the whole range of social treachery there is not an act so mean, so disastrous to the interests of the community, and so safely practised by any man with the ordinary amount of business and legal knowledge, as robbing the ignorant and pardonably credulous investor of hardly-earned savings. The Government which at once permits this ignorance and does little or nothing to avert its natural results, cannot be held to be fulfilling its duties, either by those who aim at the complete independence of the masses, or by those who confine their hopes to making dependence tolerable.

One of the most difficult ideas for the poor to grasp is the necessity of their co-operation with agencies designed for the amelioration of their condition; their conception of receiving benefits is purely passive.
It is rare to find as much idea of 'working together' as was shown by a little girl of five and a half. Her brother of four had been to a Harvest Thanksgiving, and on his return asked his nurse, 'Why did we go to church to-day, Nanna?' 'To thank God for all He gives us, especially food.' 'Oh, poached eggs and things?' 'No, Ronny,' interrupted his sister instructively, 'God sends the eggs boiled and we poaches them ourselves.' Figuratively speaking, my patients were perfectly content to be without eggs, but the eggs were expected to arrive poached, if at all.

There is also wonderfully little idea of gratitude, or of any reciprocal duties. Only an elect minority of my patients ever thought of sending a letter of thanks to the Association, and quite three-fourths of those who wished to show any kindness to me were exceedingly poor country labourers. 'I thank you a thousand times, but isn't there any little thing that us could do for 'ee?' one tiny, little old woman asked me wistfully. Somehow she heard that my poultry were 'wonders for greenstuff,' and sent her husband toiling up the hill with a bag of cabbage trimmings of unknown date. I dared not try the effects on my prize Buff Orpingtons, and the gift was secretly burnt. Not long after he again appeared with a bundle of dry roots which he presented to me as 'lovely flowers for my garden.' I knew his taste in colour—there are cottage flowers which, as the French say, simply shriek—but, having the cabbage leaves on my conscience, I begged him to plant them wherever he thought they would flourish best. 'They '11 be something lovely in the summer,' he said happily when the first green shoots appeared; but they withered away that bitter spring, and so did
he. 'I do feel he's never had nothing all his life but hard work,' cried his daughter with convulsive sobs, but he would have chosen a different epitaph.

In many cases it was almost impossible to make patients realise that doctor and nurse could be of no use to them if they disobeyed all instructions as soon as their backs were turned. I have known patients, especially men, hurry home by a short cut when they caught sight of either of these persons coming to visit them, and retire to bed so hastily that not even their boots were removed. They did not see that this conduct in any way reduced their chances of cure. The art of healing is entirely occult. I must own that it was sometimes convenient to take advantage of the fact that the poor generally look upon a reason as a thing not meant to be understood. The judicious use of long words tided over awkward moments when it was undesirable to answer a question and impolitic to refuse to do so. In many cases, as with children, explanation means disillusionment and a sense of loss. I remember a little girl of four years old who was heard repeatedly murmuring a long word, and her father, thinking to please her, told her the meaning of it. She burst into tears; at last, with her mother's assistance, he learnt the reason of her grief: 'It was my word that I put myself to sleep with, and now you've spoilt it.'

Even with the best intentions to make herself clearly understood, a nurse in a strange household is always at as great a disadvantage as a mathematical master would be if suddenly called on to explain a problem briefly to a class of unknown boys all educated at different schools on different systems, and varying considerably in age and intelligence.
 Poor women often remind me of clever children who have been left too much to themselves. They are full of unexpected knowledge and unsuspected ignorance, and, just as with sensitive and reticent children, their grotesque misconceptions are only betrayed by some chance remark. Curious indeed are the interpretations put by children even upon what we imagine to be simple statements couched in simple language. By request, I had frequently repeated 'Simple Simon' to a little girl between four and five years old, and one day she surprised me with the following exegesis of the final verse: 'Stupid! How could he catch the whale when his mother had tooked away the water in her pail, and he had none water at all?'

When one finds mothers able to realise the strictness with which medical instructions are intended to be carried out, they have usually paid dearly for the knowledge. One of our nurses was surprised to see the care and exactness shown with regard to the diet of a lad of sixteen suffering from enteric fever. She made some comment of a complimentary type, and the woman replied with a cheerful laugh, 'Well, I'd ought to know, for I pretty near killed my eldest boy through not knowing—or not believing. He was in hospital with the same complaint, but an awful bad case, much worse than Jim. When he was getting a bit better, I was let see him. He was thin as a shadder, and too weak to speak, but his eyes looked at me that asking and pitiful! "Son," I says, "what is it you wants? Tell your mother! Come, now." But he couldn't, and I kep' on askin' is it this, is it that, and at last I says, "D'you fancy one o' Mother's home-baked cakes?" Such a gleam come into his
eyes! I says, "Just you wait, son. You shall have it when I come a-Sunday, whether they will or no." So I goes home, and I mixes up a little flat cake with plenty of currants and sugar and all, and I bakes it in a saucer, and on Sunday I takes it to him under my jacket. He still couldn't speak, but he whips the cake under his pillow in no time. Next day I gets a terrygram, and back to the hospital I goes. "If you haven't killed your boy," they says, "it ain't for want of trying," and they did go on at me! He must have been a bit off his head, for instead of eating the cake quiet in his bed, he crawled out and thought for to hide hisself in a corner of the room to enjoy it, and they caughted him before he was more 'n half-way through. It give him a dreadful throw-back, and I 've been afraid of the typhoid ever since.'

The idea that all evil conduct arises from ignorance is flattering to human nature, and in a certain transcendental sense it is true, but in daily life it cannot be said that virtue bears any strict proportion to knowledge. One or two good principles with a strong motive behind them, ambition, family affection, or religious faith, will lift men and women higher than a categorical acquaintance with the name and place of every virtue in Christendom. 'Why should I do what you call right?' is a question as frequent as ever it was, and some adequate working motive must be found. Ambition appeals to few, and not all can rise to a spiritual religion, or feel the consciousness of any link between God and man, but there are scarcely any who cannot love their children heartily and their neighbour effectually.

The district nurse is happy in her efforts at teaching in that powerful motives for practice lie all around
her; she is not dealing with isolated units, but with families, and at a time when the weakness of some members may be trusted to bring out the strength of the rest. There may be higher motives than family affection, but there is none that can be more safely counted on and taken for granted in the ordinary working-class household. In many of the less satisfactory homes it should be remembered that the uneducated are so open to suggestion that it is possible to stir up and increase the love and pity felt for a helpless child or an aged parent, and that it is certainly better to make the attempt than to weaken these natural feelings and let them atrophy by disuse.

The district nurse has, further, the advantage that, unlike the hospital and dispensary doctor, the preacher, the County Council lecturer, and many another zealous worker, she gives her instructions in the very place where they have to be carried out, and can adapt them to local conditions. Teachers who do not know the homes of those whom they address run the risk of offering advice which is either impracticable or dangerous. Those of their hearers most in need of teaching least realise the extent to which circumstances alter cases, and they themselves do not realise how local conditions may vary from one street, and even from one house to another. To one mother the best advice may be, 'Let your child go to the infirmary. You cannot do justice to her here. While she is gone, try and save up a little money and buy her a better bed and more nourishing food,' while to her neighbour it will be, 'Do not part with the child on any account. You can give her everything she wants, and all your love in addition.' In one type of home the old father or mother will be happy and useful,
while an ordinary workhouse will be peace and safety and positive joy when compared with the life that would be led by any dependent person some three doors away.

There is much indirectness of speech among the uneducated poor, and it is doubtless connected with the haziness of their mental processes. 'I didn't know 'em apart until I seed 'em together,' said one very intelligent woman. The power to compare things without 'seeing them together' is generally lacking. Exaggeration is a very common failing. One day, making conversation, I complained that the flies were troublesome. 'Yes,' put in a woman eagerly, 'one bit my sister's finger yesterday, and the blood was rainin' down off her!'

The expression reminded me of an incident that took place many years ago, in the lodgings of a determined begging-letter writer. A chubby little girl of about five was sitting on the floor with a particularly neat pair of shoes sticking out in front of her; with her head nodding and her lips moving she was busily scrawling from side to side of the blank leaf of a circular. We were alone for a few minutes, and I begged her to tell me what she was writing. After some persuasion she consented to interpret a portion: 'My poor boys have none soos and their feets is 'teamin' of bud.' The concluding words pleased her enormously, and were repeated twice with solemn relish. Fortunately for the charitable public, the powers that be intervened, and she was not brought up to the family trade. When I last heard of her she was earning an honest but rather insufficient living, and I wished that her inborn talent had been trained rather than suppressed.
Some of the words in common use among the poor supply a real want, or are extremely expressive. 'None of us was never no great rove-about,' said one woman of her family in general. Deteriorate could not exactly fill the place of an anxious mother's 'disimprove,' and 'dumb-saucy' describes a method of warfare known to all teachers and employers. 'We're poor, but at least my children are always water-sweet,' said another.
XI

HOW THE POOR TREAT THE POOR

It has often been said, 'If you are innocent, may you be tried by a judge; if you are guilty, may there be a jury!' The rich are generally willing to pay what they owe, but the poor are far more zealous in freewill-offerings than in carrying out the terms of a fixed engagement. When any working-class woman was about to undergo an operation in her own home and I asked her what arrangements she had made with regard to the care of house and children, if she replied that a 'friend' would 'oblige' her, I was tolerably satisfied; if she said she had 'engaged' any one, experience made me doubtful as to whether the terms of the engagement would be faithfully kept, and I could seldom reconcile myself to the money price that had to be paid in these circumstances. A friend or a relative will sit up all night without payment, and ask for no refreshment but a cup of tea, while from 5s. to 7s. 6d. and at least two meals is the charge for sitting up in the poorest house 'in a business way,' and a woman engaged by the week demands from 10s. to 14s. and all her food. The matter was often forced upon my attention because, unless in most exceptional cases, district nurses do not work between ten P.M. and eight A.M., and there are not always
enough relatives to undertake night nursing if it is required for more than a short period. A woman 'to keep things going' in the daytime expects from 7s. to 10s. a week, even from patients whose husbands are not earning as much as 30s., and it frequently takes the invalid months of pinching and privation to pay off the extra bills caused by their selfishly careless housekeeping. Nominally these wages do not include 'keep,' but a person in such a position is considered fairly honest if she stops short at feeding herself. In a further stage of dishonesty, she simply prides herself on 'never carrying a mite out of the house'—her husband and children call frequently and eat on the premises. Another person's point of honour is often a little difficult to understand. A woman who had had five illegitimate children, each with a different father, and was doing her best to earn a living for herself and the surviving remnant, had fallen into arrears with her rates, and received threats of a summons. She went in great indignation to the overseer, who, after considering the case, tried to soothe her by offering to put her on the 'excused' list. Much to his surprise, she declined the offer as degrading to her dignity and most wounding to her feelings: she always had paid taxes and she always would; it was time that she was asking for, not exemption.

Except in times of illness, one is inclined to exclaim, 'How little the poor pay the poor for their services!' I knew a pupil-teacher of eighteen, lodging in a superior cottage, where she remained every week from Monday morning until Friday evening, receiving full board on these five days, and occupying a good bedroom with a fireplace. For this she paid an inclusive charge of 6s., which stopped entirely during the holidays.
'But I suppose she waits on herself to some extent?' I asked. 'Not she!' was the reply. 'I have to do everything just the same as if she was a lady, beginning with calling her of a morning and carrying up her hot water. My daughter'll soon have to go and lodge like it at C—, but I've told her plain, "Now, mind, wherever you go, just let 'em see you've been properly brought up. Make your own bed and keep your room tidy, and don't try on no such silly games." And I don't believe she will, neither; but you never can tell what girls is till you see 'em away from home.'

Some years ago, in villages where the usual wages were 14s., unmarried sons living with their parents only paid 6s., and if they lived with strangers there was merely an additional charge of sixpence for washing. At present, even where the wages are higher, the charge is from 7s. to 9s., and better food is expected. Fifteen shillings, board and lodging, is the highest sum I have ever known paid by a working-man as a continuance, but on the other hand, for short or uncertain periods they frequently pay 12s. in return for the fourth part of a small bedroom, and the roughest and most ill-served meals. Their necessity is some one else's opportunity, and they fall an easy prey, for even if far better accommodation could be obtained within half a mile, few men have the courage or patience to search for it. In fact, a woman will often succeed in making better terms for herself, her husband, and baby than the man could obtain for himself alone.

Another school-teacher lodged in a house rented at £18; she had a good bedroom and the right to the entire use of the larger of the two sitting-rooms, with a fire when required, and the use of a piano. She paid 10s. a week for board and lodging, the week in
her case lasting the full seven days, and all payment ceasing during the holidays. 'And she’s that particular,' complained the landlady. 'Often after she’s had a hot dinner and toast and jam for her tea, she’ll say, “I hope you’ve got something very nice for supper. I know I shall be hungry.”' For various reasons the landlady did not like to give her notice, but she was relieved when at the end of the year the girl decided that she must go 'where there’s a centre.' In addition the girl had accepted the situation in the village school without understanding that she was to teach sewing to every standard, although, as the other teacher was a man and nearly sixty years of age, she can hardly have needed to be told that this would be part of her duty. The landlady happened to be an expert needlewoman, and a large part of her Saturdays had to be given to cutting out and fixing the children’s work, for which assistance no payment whatever was offered. 'And yet she’s so conscientious,' said the poor woman, 'I believe she’d die before she sewed herself on a button with the school cotton.' In so many cases conscience appears to be purely legal, to arise from a knowledge of the law, not to create a standard of conduct. I asked a very intelligent little girl of eleven who, owing to her father’s occupation as a waiter, spent eight months of the year in Manchester and four in a pleasure resort, why she disliked going to school in the afternoon during the latter period. 'Because it’s mostly sewing,' she replied, 'and they won’t trouble to teach me anything.' 'But why not?' 'Because I shan’t be here at the examination. They just give me the reel of cotton, and I have to walk round and break off needlesful for all the class, and I fit them with thimbles,
and help give out the work and put it away.' Conduct like this tends to check a very useful habit which has gradually been spreading among superior working-class parents ever since village schools were brought to the same state of efficiency as town ones—the custom of sending delicate children for several months every year to their relatives in the country.

'A poor man that oppresseth the poor is like a sweeping rain which leaveth no food,' says the Biblical proverb. This is by no means a thing of the past. The poor may not often be in a position to oppress the poor openly, but nevertheless it is done. The 'respectable' poor constantly prey upon one another by buying cheap clothing, when they know, definitely, unmistakably, from the evidence of their own eyes and ears, that it cannot be produced at such a price and yet allow decent conditions of life for the workers. Women, perfectly capable of buying good, stout materials and making their own blouses and their husbands' shirts, have pointed to the flimsy ones in use, and told me all the circumstances under which they were made, without in the smallest degree realising the share of responsibility brought to them by this knowledge. They believe that the poor bear all the physical burdens of life, and the shoulders of the rich are broad enough to bear all its moral burdens. On the other hand, the 'disreputable' poor prey on those immediately above them by begging, borrowing, picking, and stealing with an ant-like minuteness and persistency. If they cannot filch coal, they will at least help themselves to paper and wood and matches; if that cannot be done, they will demand the 'loan' of boiling water, confidently expecting to receive tea, well sugared.
Great kindness and indulgence is generally shown to neighbours' children, and in very many instances the young families of worthless loafers or incompetent mothers are a serious burden upon steady men and their kind-hearted, generous wives, and it may be borne for years. An Inspector of the N.S.P.C.C. told me that when any cases of destitution or deliberate ill-treatment were suddenly brought to light, he had the greatest difficulty in preventing the weakened starvelings from being literally killed by the excessive amount of food pressed on their acceptance.

That the poor should help their neighbours is not merely desirable, but the chief thing that eases the wheels of life among them; at the same time it is sad to see them give out of their little either to people who are too worthless or too destitute for their gifts to be of any real service.

The predatory poor seldom scruple to deceive those who are but very little better off than themselves, and the simplest tricks are practised with complete success long after they have ceased to 'draw' in better-class neighbourhoods. It is distressing to find the decent poor imposed on in this way, but they are such willing victims that I can rarely succeed in passing on a lesson that I learnt very early in life. As a child young enough to be led by the hand, I remember seeing a street beggar sitting one winter's morning on the steps of a church. She begged pitifully from my companion, and receiving a silent refusal, covered her face with her apron and appeared to sob violently. I was filled with pity for her and displeasure with the stony-hearted elder who led me down a street at right angles, and I turned round to look once more at the beggar. To my innocent amazement, only one eye
was covered; the other, hard and dry, was eagerly gazing after us to see if the manoeuvre had had any effect. Since then, I have never forgotten to examine the other eye.

The lessons of experience, however, are sometimes accepted. A country girl told me, with reference to a homeless man about whom I had questioned her, 'Mother often gives him a cup of tea when he's passing, though she wouldn't give anything but cold water to a tramp. She doesn't even wish to do that, for we often run so short with water that she can't let the children drink to their liking, much less wash them to hers. She tells them to drink all they want at school, but by the time they've walked home on a road over their boots in dust, they're as thirsty as for ever. But she asked a policeman about giving water to tramps, and he says it's the law. Mother's been set against tramps ever since one reg'lar done her, and at a time when she was a good bit worse off than she is now, though there wasn't half the number of children. Father couldn't get any work at all on a farm that year, and he had to go right away on a big coasting vessel, and she had to manage as best she could until he'd be able to send her a month's pay. Well, a tramp came by and pretended he was deaf and dumb, and she felt so sorry for him she was fit to cry, and she gave him a threep'ny piece with a hole in it that she 'd kept for luck, and half a loaf and a good bit of cheese. Then she went across the meadow to fetch herself a bucket of water, and she heard voices at the corner, and she looked through the hedge, and there was the deaf and dumb man talking and laughing nineteen to the dozen, and there she 'd given him what she missed.'
Although the supposed fact that the rich do not 'miss' what they give away is the usual excuse for any lack of gratitude, I am not at all sure that the poor feel much more thankfulness to their helpful neighbours. After all, giving is an exercise of power, and we must not expect that the persons who suffer our kindness will find it a wholly pleasurable experience.

Ben Jonson was of opinion that self-deception is an easier matter for the poor man than for the rich:

'For, be he rich, he straight with evidence knows
Whether he have any compassion
Or inclination unto virtue, or no;
Where the poor knave erroneously believes
If he were rich he would build churches, or
Do such mad things.'

But it is not always so: a chronic invalid relating to me with great pleasure all the details of a visit paid to her by a lady, added naïvely, 'If I was a lady, I should be so proud I wouldn't know nobody,' and an old man told me, with sly enjoyment of his own humour, 'The weak must be cunnin'.' He was satisfied, moreover, that lots are less unfairly divided than appears at the first glance, for after a passing phase of envy with regard to some millionaires of whose doings he had been reading in Lloyd's Weekly, he asked the unanswerable question, 'What are all this world's toys without health?'

The poor are so much in the habit of helping their relatives, and labourers are often so closely connected with artisans, and these again with the prosperous lower middle-classes, that it is impossible, without the most intimate knowledge, to say what the income and resources of any one family really are. Even if
nominally of the same class, a difference in character, health, or intellect is sure to place some of the members in a superior position, and in ordinary cases every branch of the family benefits to some degree. I knew one instance where seven sisters had all married men earning about the same wages. One brother-in-law died suddenly, leaving ten children under eleven (all but one were under eight), the furniture of a cottage, and a hundred and forty pounds in money. All the others had almost equally large families, but a council was held, and every one of them gave substantial and continuous help. Deciding that a 'roof over their heads' was of the first importance, and knowing how quickly money may be frittered away, they added enough to the widow's capital to enable her to buy the cottage she lived in. The branch I was best acquainted with adopted one of the girls, and it was a long time before I knew she was not their own child; one sister gave eighteenpence a week, another dressed all the boys, and so, with a little further help from the parish, the home was kept together.

There is a general belief that the 'risen' shake off their unprosperous relatives, and I have known instances where child cousins who longed to play together were forbidden to do more than 'say good morning and walk on,' but this is by no means the usual course. If relatives are disowned it is generally because they are disreputable as well as poor. Doubtless a slightly higher standard is required of them than if they were rich—but that is a point upon which few people can afford to be critical.

It has often troubled me to see how the reckless and extravagant poor will 'eat up the economies' of more careful relatives, especially when illness can
be used as a lever to open their purse. I recollect a respectable, hard-working servant, with a few pounds in the savings bank, reduced to tears by the reproaches showered on her because she declined to buy for her sick father things that doctor and nurse had assured her were unnecessary and even harmful, and knowing all the time that if he did not recover within a few weeks, she would need every penny she had for her foolish mother and helpless little sisters.

Nothing more clearly illustrates the injustice and the generosity of the poor than the treatment meted out to daughters in service. If they have no money at all, they are welcome to remain at home for weeks and months at a stretch, whether their impecuniosity arises from personal extravagance, low wages, or ill-health, and however badly off the parents may be. On the other hand, as long as these young women have any money, they must pay not merely the parents' actual outlay, but as large a sum as they would be charged by strangers. Servants in good situations have often told me, 'I can't take my monthly holiday more than once a quarter. Unless I go home, mother is offended, and complains to father, and every time I go, I never get out of it under five shillings. And the children think I'm made of money—not a birthday must pass, let alone Christmas, and now they're learning to look to Easter besides.'

The many cases in which strong girls between sixteen and four- or five-and-twenty will impose upon their parents is a grave social evil. Only too often nothing but the parents' literal and immediate inability to support them is accepted as a reason for working. A few weeks ago a labourer's daughter, a fine, healthy girl of nearly seventeen, astounded me by saying,
Of course there's no need for me to be in service. Mother could keep me quite well.' There are four entirely dependent children, and the mother is in bad health. The girl is so far held in check by the father that she dares not give notice to leave, but she is doing her best to tire out her employers' patience, and as soon as she has bought enough blouses and belts for the season, she will go home for five or six months. Another labourer has five necessarily dependent children, an older boy who earns a few shillings a week, and a daughter of eighteen who absolutely refuses to work. From time to time a situation is found for her, and she is half forcibly conveyed to it, but never remains more than three days. Incredible as it may seem, many lads between sixteen and twenty-two are allowed to behave in much the same way, and often depend on their parents for half the year. Conduct of this kind is more frequently met with in country villages than in towns, and in small towns than in large ones. The evils of high rent are great, but high rent is an indirect check upon laziness and voluntary unemployment, especially as overcrowding is more seriously grappled with in great cities, and additional members to a family mean the supply of additional space as well as of food. The educated prejudice in favour of rural conditions is so great, and the talk of depopulation so incessant, that it is difficult to induce any one to believe that overcrowding can exist in a village. Not long ago, in one of the most beautiful hamlets in England, a girl in service told me: 'I was down home last Sat'day, and the woman next door was drunk, and she 'd locked Alice out of the house. There it was, nearly nine o'clock at night, pitch dark, and the poor child crying
fit to break her heart. I went and rapped at the door until the woman came out in a rage, and then I said I'd tell the police if she didn't let Alice in, and let her go to bed in peace. She swore at me most awful, but she was afraid to keep her out any longer.' I said, 'Really it is not safe for a young girl like you to get into a dispute with a drunken and violent woman. I am sure that your mother would have taken Alice in for the night. I know how kind she has been to her at all times.' 'Well, miss, I'd have got mother to do it, but you simply couldn't squeeze her in. When father and mother took the house, there was but the one bedroom, and they hadn't never been used to that sort of thing, so they got the landlord to divide it into two and knock out a bit of a window the other side. You've been in our kitchen? Well, the children's bedroom is half the size of that, and not so high by a long way. Nellie sleeps with mother, but that leaves five of them, and there has to be three beds because the doctor said Edie must sleep alone because she might have a fit. They either have to stand on their beds to dress, or only dress one at a time. All their other clothes is kept in the kitchen.' The rent of this house was £10 a year, and it had to be taken by the quarter. The previous tenant had remained forty-three years, and had had a family of eleven children.

The working-classes, when influenced by demagogues, may believe that the wealth of the rich has been robbed from the poor, but if left to themselves they rather incline to the opinion that wealth arises from the accumulated results of innumerable acts of 'meanness,' i.e. from constantly and needlessly declining to enjoy, or to allow any one else to enjoy,
one's superfluities. 'They 've no need to be so mean with their game!' cried one woman. 'It doesn't cost 'em anything. They 've only to go out and shoot it.' This partly accounts for their general lack of envy: riches accompanied by the supposed torment of abstinence, are too utterly unattractive to excite much interest. On the other hand, a very small amount of property possessed by persons of their own class creates an atmosphere of respect for the happy owners, and their relatives hold them in great honour. As Lear's fool remarked, "Fathers that wear rags Do make their children blind; But fathers that bear bags Shall see their children kind." Also their neighbours.

Unfortunately for their own comfort, the working-classes will rarely complain in the right quarter, more especially if the offender is one of themselves. An ex-soldier, an exceptionally public-spirited man, was working for a Board in London. He was the senior of a mess of twenty men, and was much concerned at the way in which the cook robbed them of their rations, and utterly spoilt the proportion which she thought fit to prepare for them. When breakfast was ready, the men would cry, 'For goodness' sake shut up the doors and windows! The least draught and the rashers will blow away like paper.' They would sarcastically inquire when she would learn how to boil water without burning it, and at dinner-time there was often fifty per cent. of waste on their plates. On three occasions he complained to one of his superiors, who at once came to the dining-room to inquire into the matter. 'Not one of the lot would raise his voice, and there was I left stuck; as if I was calling out for luxshuries while every decent man was satis-
The cook remained until she chose to leave, and then the soldier, not yet reconciled to seeing his messmates half-starved by their own folly, managed to get himself appointed caterer, with a cook in a subordinate position. He finds it possible to supply four good meals instead of three bad ones, and provides hot cocoa for any man kept late at work or called out in the night, thus removing a constant temptation to drink. To some extent his labours are appreciated, but he knows perfectly well that the day he gives up the struggle the old state of affairs will reappear. The public supplies the money, the middle-classes supply a man ready to listen to complaints and redress any grievance, but no one has the courage to make an adverse report.

Nearly every child is a born tell-tale-tit, and the habit is considered so hateful that it is sternly repressed. Possibly, like many other unlovely qualities displayed in early youth, it ought rather to be disciplined and directed than entirely extirpated. Tale-telling is less severely discouraged in girls than in boys, and if any complaint has to be made publicly for the general benefit, or for the protection of some helpless person, working-women are a shade less unwilling to come forward than working-men. A primary school-teacher of thirty years' experience told me that she preferred teaching girls, although she found their tale-telling propensities a great annoyance.

'After all,' she added, 'it results from a difference in the way in which they are brought up. If a girl tells tales, nothing happens when she goes out into the playground; if a boy does it, he runs the risk of being half-murdered. Of course it is dishonourable
to tell tales because you can do it almost with impunity, but there is nothing very admirable in refraining from doing it because you are afraid.'

One of the most unsatisfactory features in the way the poor treat the poor, is the dishonest fashion in which they will deal with the things borrowed from one another. If a young fellow is induced to lend a bicycle to a friend, it is as likely as not to be ridden over damp flint-stones, and if any injury is done, he is left to find it out for himself. The next time he uses the machine it breaks down entirely, and the neighbours say, 'What else could you expect?' If a horse is borrowed to take three people for ten miles, the owner is lucky indeed if it does not have to take more than five people for more than twenty miles, and if it is given a drink of water and allowed to snatch a few mouthfuls of grass from the wayside. I have even known a child of twelve borrowed to 'mind' a baby and set to clean grates and scrub floors, but this led to a furious quarrel, and the two families were alienated for nearly three days—an immense period of time which marked the unusual enormity of the offence.

This general inability to respect the property of others, or to use public property carefully, will be found one of the greatest difficulties in the common ownership of machinery, suggested as a means of placing the small farmer more on a level of opportunity with the large farmer, and it makes an appreciable difference in town house-rents.

Town dwellers who are regular workers do not steal from one another; the rights of property are constantly being impressed upon the children, and if the neighbours assert that any woman cannot be trusted in this respect, they regard it as one of the worst
accusations that could be brought against her. This is very far from being the case in the country. It is almost impossible for cottagers to grow fruit, either for sale or use, because, unless it is well known to be their sole, or at least their principal, means of livelihood, a large percentage of their neighbours have not the smallest scruple in stealing it from them. The only persons they are chary of robbing, or careful to prevent their children from robbing, are those thought likely to avenge themselves by a prosecution for theft. Among these the clergy, for many reasons, cannot place themselves, and unless they have a walled garden they are as defenceless as the poorest cottager. A middle-aged woman, trying hard to provide against the rainy day, told me last summer, 'I've no heart to go on with it any more. Every bit of fruit I grow gets stole. I don't even have none for ourselves.' As a rule, vegetables are not sufficiently tempting to those who steal more for pleasure than profit, but if allotments are in an isolated position it is often doubtful whether he who sows will reap. In one district I found that gardens and allotments were almost entirely given up to potatoes; marrows, onions, carrots, and beans were as rare as peas and celery. On making inquiry among the most thrifty and respectable cottagers, I learnt that this was entirely owing to the discouragement given by the thieving propensities of a considerable minority.

A man living on the outskirts of a large village had most of his fruit-trees well in view of his windows, and they were left untouched, but a pear-tree in an unprotected position brought such showers of sticks and stones into his garden that he put a ladder against the trunk and affixed a large placard, 'Please use it.'
The suggestion was not taken, and last year, to save further annoyance, he had the tree cut down.

When allotments can be provided for men living in small towns (where houses are often as huddled together as if land were at City of London prices), or on the fringe of large ones, they are most beneficial to health and morals, but they are a doubtful blessing in rural districts. Every agricultural labourer has, or ought to have, a garden adjoining his house, and of a sufficient size to produce, with ordinary care, the year's supply of vegetables. A piece of land in this position can be cultivated with the minimum of fatigue and the maximum of profit, and in what are almost literally 'spare moments.' If it should be even a quarter of a mile away, the case is entirely altered; tools, manure, water, produce, must all be carried to and fro, the wife and young children give no assistance, and unless a man sees at least two clear hours before him, he constantly thinks it better to wait until next week. As a result, large numbers of country allotments fall into a most neglected state, the rent is frequently in arrears, and when the right to the allotment is held to have lapsed, the newcomer not uncommonly demands to have it rent free for the first year or two as some compensation for the labour entailed by clearing it from weeds.

No quality is more generally lacking among the poor than a sense of justice. Philanthropists might perhaps be of some assistance in developing it if they more frequently considered the idea in all their relations with the persons they are trying to assist. In harder-hearted days than these, the benevolent were much in the same position as the miser's wife who, when reproached with invariably giving her children their
own way, retorted, 'My dear, it is all I have to give them.' When the poor as a whole suffered from grinding injustice and severity, it seemed useless to say much to them about fair play. But those days have passed away; the poor are treated justly, and it is high time to demand that they, on their side, should act justly. I regard every employer who prosecutes a man for leaving him without due notice as a public benefactor and teacher of morals.

Many years ago I asked an experienced friend, 'How is it that the lower middle-class are so hard upon the poor, and do so little for them?' Her reply was, 'Perhaps it is because they know why they are poor, and how easily they could become poor themselves.' Just in so far as it was a fair question, it was a fair answer, but the inquiry could only have been made by a person who had lived entirely among Anglicans. In her attempts to enlighten and raise the poor the Established Church does not sufficiently utilise the virtues and energies of this very large class, but among Nonconformists this is far from being the case. In my work as a district nurse few things seemed to me more touching than the way in which many chapel members, who had difficulty in maintaining their own position, would yet devote their hard-earned money and their scanty leisure to working for the poor as nurses and as Sunday-school teachers, and as active helpers in the Mutual Improvement Societies which afford so much pleasure and instruction to the more ambitious young men and girls. One elderly woman who kept a small all sorts shop, spent nearly the whole of Sunday in teaching, and had two week-day evening classes in addition. The inevitable prizes and annual treat were paid for almost entirely
out of her own pocket. Another hard-working woman gave every Sunday afternoon to teaching a class of children, although so poor that she could scarcely afford outdoor clothing. So shabby and old fashioned were her garments, that one day she was mobbed, jeered at, and stoned by a gang of rough lads. When she reached home, being doubtless overwrought and weakened by approaching illness, she gave way to an outburst of tears, and angrily vowed that she would never leave the house again to be mocked at. That night she was taken ill, and for many months could do nothing for herself, much less for others. She told me in all seriousness that it was a 'judgment' on her for her wickedness. In proportion to their offence, I can only hope that a milder judgment fell upon her assailants.

I find that the poor, as a rule, are extraordinarily unwilling to teach one another anything. To teach your own children what you know is not the rule, and to teach any one else is almost unheard-of; while the general preference for talking about what they do not know, and cannot know, or else of the trivial and indisputable, prevents them from adding to one another's knowledge even incidentally. Conversation is largely made up of misapprehensions, conjectures, and suppositions, and inferences as boldly based upon these as if they were thoroughly established facts. All my poorest acquaintances had heard much of charity, and many of them tried to practise it, but when I endeavoured to persuade the more capable among them that teaching was one of its most beneficent forms, the opinion was regarded as a strangely unattractive heresy, probably connected with my having too much time on my hands. Any and every
hard-working person knew 'that you could do a thing five times over while you was showing any one how to do it once.' The fact that the person, once taught, could continue to do the work when you were ill, or absent, or dead, was never taken into consideration.
THE FATIGUED PHILANTHROPIST

She was about fifty, an age when it is not easy to be good-looking, and when modern moralists are agreed that it is almost impossible to be good. She was decidedly handsome, but that was a matter settled chiefly by Nature, and she told me frankly that she was tired of philanthropy, public and private, her own and other people's, and was taking an indefinite holiday from good works.

'I have never performed a kindness,' she said, 'without regretting it; not on account of the harm it did myself, for I recovered from that sooner or later, but because of the endless harm that it did to others. Talk of repentance for one's sins! I simply never have time to think of them. My leisure is entirely occupied by lamenting over my good deeds.

'How I envy our grandparents! Not my own exactly, for I doubt if they were much more fortunate or self-satisfied than I am myself. I recollect that one of them was such an advanced person that she told me it was very wrong to give money to street beggars. The only immediate result of her warning was that I gave threepence to an organ-grinder at once, and awaited events. I had never given more than a penny before. And another one—no, that was an unmarried
grand-aunt—said that absolute paupers ought not to
go on having large families, and that the people who
encouraged them in doing it were to blame, but she
horrified her own generation and the next. I mean
that I envy our grandfathers and grandmothers in
general. It is true that they had already been placed
upon rather a short allowance of the strong wine of
religious certainty; the desirable part of their lot
was the robust self-confidence with which they dubbed
themselves and one another benefactors. How differ-
ent is the thick mist of doubt through which we grope
our way! They housed the orphan and fed the hungry
and nursed the sick with radiant joy, toning down
to immovable self-satisfaction. They had no harass-
ing fears that for one case of misery relieved, ten
nerveless paupers would be called into existence.

'Of course these people have left spiritual as well
as legal descendants, and, for my own happiness,
why am I not among them? Only last month I began
reading a story written for the double purpose of
amusing the poor and enlightening the rich. The
first chapter described the home of a steady, clever,
and vigorous workman of thirty-five with a family
of eight children, the eldest thirteen. Rather an
improbable number at that age and in the ranks of
skilled labour. In Chapter II. it is revealed that the
mother has taken to secret drinking, and has a bottle
of brandy—one of a long succession—hidden in her
box. This also, granting the circumstances, was still
more improbable. The woman was in good health,
younger than her husband, and in entire subjection
to him; his wages were only two pounds a week and
the rent was ten shillings, and the man was evidently
practical enough to know what could be provided on
the remainder. It would have been about as easy for her to feed and clothe the whole family well, as she was represented doing, and yet find money for indefinite bottles of brandy, as it would be for a very moderately successful professional man's wife to buy, and pay for, such trifles as a sealskin paletot and a diamond ring. In Chapter III. the father breaks his leg immediately after breakfast on Monday morning, he is taken to hospital and the leg is amputated far above the knee before the wife even knows that he has been hurt. Shortly before midday the worthy clergyman of the parish paid her a visit, although it is represented as washing-day (a double error, by the way, as Tuesday is the almost universal washing-day). On learning the trouble that had befallen her, "he instantly tore a meat-ticket from his pocket-book," and promised to take the entire support of the family upon him, only stipulating that the mother should take the pledge and that the hired piano should be at once returned to the owner. Now in no circumstances could the father possibly have brought home a farthing more money until Friday night. After that meat-ticket I read no more, except for one queerly improbable incident: the wife postponed going to see her husband for three weeks for fear she should cry if she saw him! Apparently the writer recognised no difference between the status of a skilled artisan in regular employment and that of the poorest casual labourer, and had never heard of Trades Unions, Friendly Societies, Sick Clubs, Insurance against Accidents, Employers' Liability Acts, nor even of a Savings Bank and the magic "bit laid by."

'Then there are the journalists, fresh young souls who do not seem to have any grandparents from a
philanthropic point of view, and start as if experience were a crop of which not a single handful had yet been harvested. They rise up in the morning early and say, "Let us interview the poor," and before night-fall fill columns of newspapers with their "first-hand acquaintance with facts," obtained from persons whom these journalists have never seen before, and with whose language and habits of thought they are most insufficiently acquainted. Doctors, nurses, district visitors, employers of labour on a small scale, and ministers of all denominations know how difficult it is to understand or to make oneself understood, and they also learn to allow for the general tendency to say "no" to any question not immediately grasped, or which is suspected to have been suggested by some arrière pensée. One day I said to a fairly intelligent boy of sixteen, whom I had seen daily for several weeks and who must have been to a certain extent accustomed to my accent and diction, "Are there any soldiers in your family?" "No." "None? What are your uncles?" After four or five more questions I learnt that his mother's brother, whom he knew perfectly well, was in the Welsh Fusiliers. The lad was accustomed to apply the word "family" exclusively to his brothers and sisters. Asked how many of these there were, he replied promptly enough, "Seven boys and two girls," but that was only because his mother was a widow and he had often heard her state the number to sympathisers. Other boys of the same age have replied slowly and with great difficulty and mental calculation. I then asked how many uncles he had, and he was obliged to name them all, just as a baby of two or three if asked "How many sheep can you see?" instead of replying "Four,"
would say, "A big sheep and a little sheep and one with
a tail and one lying down." I next asked, "What
was your grandfather?" "Grandfather wasn't
nothing. He was about seventy." Six or seven
more questions were needed to elicit the certainly not
discreditable fact that his grandfather had been a
carpenter. This lad had a well-educated mother
belonging to the shop-keeping class, had passed the
Seventh Standard, and had been employed in work
of varied kinds for nearly three years.

'And the journalist can learn the life history of
five boys in five minutes! How admirable and envi-
able until one perceives the three underlying assump-
tions: that the boys understand his questions, that
he understands their answers, and that the boys are
telling him the truth. As an example of the last point:
if "out of work," four of the five lads will probably
tell him that because they asked for more wages
they were summarily dismissed and their places were
filled by boys straight from school—the truth gener-
ally being that their masters had declined to pay them
more simply for growing older. If at the same time
they had become steadier and more intelligent, there
would have been no question of dismissal. I have
seen feeble old men, apparently well over seventy,
working as carters in charge of teams of horses, while
strong young men hung round and stared at them.
"As long as they can keep on their legs," said the
masters, "we would far sooner trust them with the
horses than we would those careless young ruffians."
The average employer finds neither profit nor delight
in "sacking" his men, and often errs on the side of
keeping idle lads and drunkards whom it would be
juster, and in the end kinder, to dismiss.
I know at this moment two lads who are well on their way towards becoming tramps. They are fluent liars, although of low general intelligence, and I do not doubt that they would tell any sympathetic inquirer that their father "hadn't done nothin'" for them, and that they "hadn't never had half a chance." The father's version of the tale, and I have known him for more than six years as a steady worker and a man bearing an excellent reputation, is: "I done the best I could to give 'em a trade same as I was give myself. Bob I sent to light work on a farm, and when he was old enough I apprenticed him to a blacksmith. Tom I have apprenticed twice, to two different trades. It has all come to nothing. The other boys" (he has eight) "are wanting their turn now, and it is but fair they should have it, and I 'm trying to get Bob and Tom a place anywheres I can, just to keep them off the roads."

I know another lad of nineteen who is doing casual labour and sleeping in sheds and outhouses. He has a good home and kind parents, and nothing to do but to return to them until regular work could be found for him. The only sign left of his careful upbringing in a decent home, which he never left for a day until he was sixteen, is that he generally goes to the house of a boy friend on Sundays and changes his shirt.

Another boy lost the situation found for him when he left school. At first he told his mother nothing about his dismissal, and went in and out at the usual hours; when the matter could no longer be concealed, he flatly refused to look for work, or to do any if it were found for him, as he said his parents "were bound to support him until he was sixteen." For two whole years he lounged about all day in complete
idleness, practically living on his mother's earnings at the wash-tub. The father was a steady man, but for some unexplained reason—possibly the wash-tub—preferred lodging near his work, and only came home from Saturday till Monday, during which time, as he occupied himself solely with the younger children and rarely spoke to a neighbour, it was easy for the foolish woman to hide the state of affairs from him. At sixteen the boy consented to work, and has not done quite so badly as his mother deserves that he should. The government of poor people's families often reminds me of a little girl writing a very early exercise in Ahnese. She paused lengthily, and then asked me the gender of famille. At first she accepted my decision, presently objecting, "But the father might be masculine?"

'There is not only a lack of home discipline, but there is too early, sudden, and complete release from school discipline, and there is no public authority to reinforce parents honestly doing their best with boys who are not criminals, but who are idle and self-willed, who are ruining their own future and robbing themselves and the world before they realise what they are about. The boy with a decent home and average parents who refuses to work and refuses to learn is quite as much in need of coercion and restraint as the neglected lad who throws stones in the streets or commits petty thefts. To maintain discipline in a working-class home is an exceedingly difficult matter, but side by side with these involuntary tramp-makers there are parents who manage to hold their due position until their children are old enough to take care of themselves in the full sense of the words, and there would be more of these if there were known
to be some legally constituted authority to back them up at really critical moments. In the case of poor widows this guardianship is still more to be desired.

'I am weary of most forms of philanthropy, but chiefly of those that seem to take it for granted that the poor know nothing and care nothing about the healthy upbringing of children. After all, do they not bring up a thousand times as many as the rich and make far less fuss over the matter? The supposition that they are indifferent to their children and expect them to look after themselves at an early age is ludicrously inaccurate. The last time I was making a railway journey of forty or fifty miles, I observed a scene most truly characteristic of the poor. The only passenger from a wayside station was a boy of ten or eleven, who arrived on the platform accompanied by a woman of about forty, who demanded to see the guard, whom she bombarded with imperious orders and directions, exacting promises which he must have found it difficult to fulfil. I noticed that she asked him no questions, so she had certainly had other victims. She then carefully helped the boy into a carriage occupied by a widow and two spinsters, handed him all his parcels, told him over and over again where he was to change, warned him to sit still until the guard came for him, implored him not to lean against the door and not to put his head out of the window. At due intervals he replied, "Awr right, auntie." At last one of the spinsters gave an involuntary laugh and said, "Really, how sad to think that I was not half as valuable even when I was half his age. I have travelled alone since I was six." The widow capped this by telling a tale of her little nephew who had safely travelled alone at the age of
five, and manfully refused all inducements to get out until he reached the right station. The woman, unmoved, went through her warnings twice more from beginning to end, and her last words as we steamed out of the station were: "Now I’ll go and send 'um a terrygrum to say as you ’ve started." Judging from their clothing, their speech, and their lack of cleanliness on such an important occasion, the pair must have come from as poor a home as I have ever seen.

'And then there is all this talk about nourishing food and the provision of free meals. Thank goodness! I have realised at last that food, exercise of mind and body, clothes, housing, and moral and religious training form one organic whole. If you can give the entire scale a push up, well and good; if you can cautiously improve a little here and a little there, well and good; if you devote all your efforts to improving one point only, you upset the balance of what has, after all, been proved to be tolerable, if not admirable. And from my experience with ten or a dozen working lads between the ages of fourteen and eighteen, I have come to the conclusion that improved food upsets the balance quicker and more disastrously than anything else. I employed the lads for a small amount of boot and knife-cleaning and to groom a pony, which they occasionally drove, and the rest of their day's work (averaging eight hours on week-days and one on Sundays) was vegetable and flower-growing. They slept at home and took their meals in my kitchen. When they first came they were weedy, pale-faced, narrow-chested, and spindle-legged, but they were willing and tolerably obedient, and although given to shuffling and evasion they did not lie shamelessly, nor did they indulge in undiluted romance; they
were not actively kind to animals, nor in any way solicitous about their health and comfort, but neither were they deliberately cruel. One and all, in the course of from six weeks to six months, they went through the same stages of physical improvement, accompanied by moral and even mental deterioration. They walked better, their eyes and complexion cleared, their muscles hardened, their chest measurement increased, but they became lazy, sullen, wantonly cruel, and hopelessly, madly untruthful. I was such a firm believer in "plenty of good, plain food" that for years I attributed all this to anything and everything but what I am now convinced was the cause— increase of nourishment without any corresponding change of other habits. Since then I have employed four boys who 'lived out,' and while their physical improvement was slower and less obvious, no moral deterioration took place.

'One reason why I was blinded to the truth is that I never found good food have anything but a good effect on girl servants. The explanation of this difference probably is that several conditions of their lives are improved in service. In addition to nourishing food, they have more exercise, indoors and out, they have properly ventilated bedrooms, they are well dressed and expected to be very clean, and most of their spare time, instead of being spent like the boys in lounging, smoking, and idle gossip, is filled by needlework, reading, and letter-writing, while the more or less constant association with their mistress affords a certain amount of mental stimulus. If the feeding of lads and lassies living at home were greatly improved without corresponding alterations being made on equally important points, I should be most heartily
sorry for themselves, their parents, and their employers.

'To return to the boys: I once engaged a widow's son, the second of a family of nine, ranging in age from seven to eighteen. He had been three months out of work, with the exception of a week, when he had taken the place of an errand-boy during the latter's annual holiday, and he had never earned more than seven shillings a week. He had only the clothes he stood up in, and his boots were almost past repair. The mother also was out of work (out of paid work, that is to say!), and the whole family were existing on the earnings of a lad of eighteen and a boy of thirteen, who had left school after winning a scholarship which lapsed owing to poverty too great for him to be able to take any advantage of it. On the first two mornings the boy I had engaged was given fried bacon for breakfast, which he ate. On the third day cold boiled bacon was provided, the ordinary country servants' breakfast, except that it chanced to be of far better quality than is usually bought for them. He declined to eat it, and seemed fully to expect that something else would instantly be cooked for him. A friend of mine had a similar experience with a girl whom she had taken as a between maid from a wretchedly poor cottage, the father dead after a lingering illness, the mother weak with cold and privation.

'I think a really useful book could be prepared if a dozen well-meaning people—originally well-meaning, I should say, for perhaps, like myself, they will have ceased to mean anything or desire anything except rest from good works and consequent remorse—were each induced to write a chapter on philanthropy that failed, strictly confining themselves to personal en-
deavour and experience. It would be more enlightening than all the books of confessions in existence. Every child knows that if he does wrong he will probably be uncomfortably sorry for it, but we all need to be taught the mischief that is likely to arise when we try to do good.

'Then we are so anxious about the morals of the poor. We especially find fault with them for want of truth, and do not seem in the least aware that they constantly accuse us of wilful and interested lying. Just in the same way, men think women untruthful in their relations with them, and women know that men "are deceivers ever." Would it not be fairer to say that rich and poor, men and women, vary chiefly in their ideas as to when it is excusable, justifiable, or even compulsory to deceive? A man, for instance, will rarely lie to keep what he already has, but he will often lie to obtain what he covets, while a woman will do exactly the reverse. If she loses what she has, the world is empty; if he cannot get what he wants, the world is stale and unprofitable.

'The poor often tell what seem to the rich wholly gratuitous lies, but they will tell the truth on occasions when the rich would lie unblushingly. The poor are generally honest, though rarely honourable, and neither honour nor honesty are as common among the upper classes as we like to believe. Listen to candidates for an examination. Age and sex need not be taken into consideration, for the spirit is the same in the whole of them: the examiner is an enemy, and if he can be deluded, there is no harm in deluding him, and this state of mind is often fostered by otherwise conscientious teachers. If physical examination of the candidates is demanded, there are no bounds
to what they consider permissible deception. Although well knowing that in navy, army, or merchant service a defect in their eyesight might cost hundreds of lives, they will, if possible, cheat and trick the examiner, and help their fellow-candidates to do the same. I was told of one man who managed to get himself accepted as an army surgeon although minus two fingers, and his cousin, who quite needlessly related the story to me, had evidently not the faintest conception that there was anything dishonourable in holding the hands in such a position that no unsuspicious person would observe the unusual deficiency.

‘If the examination is competitive, some duty towards fellow-candidates is acknowledged, but in a mere qualifying examination anything may be done. A young barrister told me some years ago, “Except in the scholarship exams., there was no pretence at fair play. Not only notes but actual text-books were taken into the room, and sometimes passed round from one to the other. Only a porter sat in the room with us.”

‘Again, is it the poor who travel with a time-expired season-ticket, or in a higher class than they have paid for? What is the average morality of the well-to-do with regard to the treatment of hired furniture, horses, bicycles, etc.? Why this perpetual assumption that we know so much better than the poor, and on every conceivable point? When we take entire charge of their children, are we so very wise, or practical, or economical, or successful in our treatment of them? And if we took them in infancy, it is more than doubtful whether we should even be able to maintain life in their frail little bodies. How often the saying is repeated and
held up to scorn, “We gives the child what we has ourselves.” It appears to be considered the low-water mark of motherhood. There is no recognition of the self-sacrificing ideal which lies at the back of the verbal expression. Mothers of this type need little but enlightenment, while I defy any philanthropist to do much in homes where the despised formula is not the leading rule of parental conduct. There are homes where parents not only drink heavily but eat extravagantly, while their children (commonly insured) drag out a miserable existence on crusts, cold water, and scraps provided by the mistaken kindness of the neighbours. The vast majority of the poor, however, are so convinced that it is mean and wrong to have anything better than, or even different from, their children, that the plain nursery and schoolroom meals of the upper classes are a puzzle and a scandal if accidentally made known to them. I remember tracing a great deal of gossip concerning alleged unkindness to a girl of fifteen to the mere facts, carried by a charwoman and spread through a very poor neighbourhood, that she was more simply dressed than her grown-up sisters, did not dine with them, and was never taken to dances or theatres.

‘Just as an example of one side of the manner in which “State” children are treated. I knew two or three little villagers who by the magistrates’ order were consigned to the workhouse. It happened to be a week or two before the annual Sunday-school treat, and I feared that it would be a bitter disappointment to them to miss it. I thought of asking the vicar, who was also a poor-law guardian and rural councillor, to allow them to attend the festivity if I fetched them and took them back, but when the time
came I was too much occupied to be able to carry out any plans of the kind, and after hearing of the "entertainment" that had been provided for these little waifs, and about twenty more orphan and deserted children, I was glad that I had not interfered. Within four miles there was an interesting little town which few of the children had ever visited; it contained a fine castle with open grounds and every facility for cheap picnicing. Within three miles in the opposite direction there was a good stretch of sea-beach backed by grassy downs. Neither of these places was good enough. The children were conveyed in carriages to a ruined abbey eleven miles off and given a hot luncheon at the best of the three hotels. Swings, etc., were provided, and after playing for an hour or two, they were driven five miles to a private house where they had tea, and they were then driven back to the Home. With the exception of the tea, all this came out of the ratepayers' pockets.

'What did the ratepayers of the union, small farmers, struggling tradesmen, artisans, and labourers, do for the amusement of their own children? Most of them were satisfied to give them a bottle of tea or milk (often plain water) and their usual supply of bread-and-butter or jam, and sent them to play in the castle grounds. More ambitious and painstaking parents made or bought a cheap cake, packed up a tea kettle and a few cups, and walked with their family to the beach, where they gathered sticks and made a fire. As for the Sunday-school treats in that neighbourhood they invariably took place in a field just cleared of hay. The children had room to play, a limited supply of cake at fourpence a pound, and a still more limited supply of bread-and-butter and sweetened tea. In a
few cases Punch and Judy or an organ-grinder were added, or a few nuts and ginger-snaps for a scramble. And for this the mothers are willing to wash the white frocks and iron the deep, stiff collars twice in one week, and the children themselves are more than content, they are wildly delighted.

‘If I had the enviable ability to be soothed or alarmed by rearrangements of statistics, or even by mere words, perhaps I should not be so tired of philanthropy. The word “heredity,” for instance, caused huge mental discomfort to large numbers of people a few years ago; scientists have seen reason to replace it by such expressions as “tendency,” “special susceptibility,” etc., and the easily frightened, easily calmed multitudes are content to fall asleep once more. But what practical difference does it make to a child helpless to improve its own environment, whether it “inherits” phthisis from its parents or acquires it by sharing their bedroom? What better chance is there for a drunkard’s child, unaided, because he does not “inherit” the craving for drink, and is not born feeble than other sons of men, if mind and body must speedily deteriorate owing to the wretched circumstances of his daily life which he has no power to control until he reaches an age when they will have set an indelible stamp on him? “I didn’t kill it, I didn’t!” protested a little girl when accused of having killed a chicken that had trespassed in her flower-garden. Asked to what charge she would plead guilty she replied, “I laid the stick on to it and it died.” We are almost as childish in the way we fight or rejoice over words, and ignore the bearings of the facts that they are intended to describe.

‘Perhaps I shall revive again some day. It is not
work that has worn out my patience, but the cloudiness and uncertainty and the gigantic weeds that spring up from what previous generations labelled confidently, "Good seed: sow freely at all seasons." People pray that their paths may be made easy; they ought rather to pray that they may be clearly marked. The man who claimed credit for being content with his appointed patch, little realised the peculiar blessings of his lot.'
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