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CONDITION OF THE LABOURING POOR, AND THE MANAGEMENT OF PAUPERS IN SCOTLAND.

A POOR LAW is as decided a feature of civilisation as those laws for the security of life and property without which civil society cannot be said to exist. A Poor Law is, moreover, the promoter of civilisation; one of the most important means of preserving the peace and the equilibrium of the social system; a corrective of the inevitable tendency to excessive accumulation in the hands of the few, concurring with the extreme destitution of the many; an evil which is to be regarded as only secondary to the want of security for life and property. Poor Laws are auxiliaries of the march of improvement, as they form the preventive of the perpetuated hereditary debasement of a large and valuable portion of the community, who, without their sustaining power, remain a down-draught on social progress, while their suffering condition hardens or corrupts every other class. Slavery is to be condemned, not alone for the misery and degradation which it entails on the slave, but also for the deadening of the moral feelings, and the actual cruelty and profligacy which the unnatural condition of the slave engenders in his master. In like manner, the mischievous consequences of unrelieved misery and destitution, existing in the bosom of an otherwise prosperous society, cannot long be confined to the actual sufferers, were the luxurious portion of society so selfish and inhuman as to disregard all suffering which did not immediately affect themselves.

As the growth of indigence cannot be prevented in any society that is not in a state of perfect stagnation, destitution is, in fact, often to be held as a proof of advancing civilisation, and of a widening range of wants; wise legislation has, therefore, been more directed to the relief of poverty than to the suppression of its symptoms, which are far from being uniformly to be considered as evils. It is painful to see a poor English family unable to procure shoes and stockings, which their habits have taught them to regard as necessaries of life, and which, if they cannot

procure by work, they must ask from the parish; but it is surely as bad to see an Irish or Scottish family in the same condition, but with no sense of degradation, and, consequently, no stimulus to improve their condition.

The Jewish institutions were highly favourable to the poor. Charlemagne established Poor Laws; and the latest conquerer and civilizer of our own times, Mehemet Ali, has, along with a public system of education, and hospitals for the destitute sick and lunatics, attempted to introduce a Poor Law into Egypt.

But the principle of a Poor Law, whether in Scotland or in Egypt, must, to produce the full amount of advantage, have a determinate relation to the circumstances of the society in which it exists. It is not enough that the thousands sinking into destitution, by almost imperceptible degrees, learn at length to vegetate in the midst of that wealthy community in which they are unable longer to *live*; as *living*, with its endless refinements of habit and sentiment, has come to be considered in the very lowest ranks of those independent labourers, whose moral necessities have happily extended more rapidly and widely than their animal wants. Advancing civilisation has made cleanliness of person and dress as urgent a want as clothing, and the preservation of the feelings of modesty and delicacy, by separate apartments for the different sexes, as indispensable as shelter from the weather. It is so among the peasantry of England, where indigence is not held an excuse for filth, squalor, and reckless indifference to the decencies of life; because, long before destitution becomes so extreme and so destructive of all good feelings and habits, the Poor Law interposes its protective and sustaining power; a Poor Law of which the regulating principle is, not what will barely sustain a coarse and joyless animal existence, but a rule which enables the infirm, the aged, the widow, and the orphan poor, and also the able-bodied labourer who cannot

procure employment, to maintain their former habits of cleanliness and neatness, and, although curtailed in the comforts of life, to retain its decencies. Even under the rigid system of the reformed work-houses of England, the provision made for personal cleanliness, and the change of body and bed linen, indicate and maintain a social condition, a system of elevating necessities of which the industrious independent labourers of many parts of Scotland, and of nearly all Ireland, as yet know nothing. But is this extravagance in clothing and washing to be considered as a vice of the English poor law system? And what shall be said of a system which neither sustains the moral feelings and mental energies, by stimulating and keeping in activity the artificial wants of the indigent classes; nor yet supplies, in any adequate degree, their merely animal necessities?—which practically considers a high standard of comfort, and anything approaching to luxury in the labouring class, as a national calamity, entailing indigence on the poor, and on the rich the future burthen of a higher poor rate?—what shall be said of such a system?—It is ours.

While the circle of the artificial wants of the affluent extends in every direction, and takes the most fantastic and extravagant forms, the little enjoyments of the labouring class must be curbed and repressed, until society exhibits those painful and dangerous extreme contrasts, which are symptomatic of its unhealthy condition, and which completely overturn the aphorism of political economy, that whatever makes the rich man richer tends also to elevate the poor; while the reverse may, at the same time, hold; namely, that whatever depresses the rich, must still farther impoverish the poor.

But leaving generalities, which are here out of place, we proceed to finish our prescribed task, which was to shew, however imperfectly, the actual operation of the Scottish system of Poor Laws. "In fact," says Dr Alison, in his valuable pamphlet, "the practical operation of the Scotch system is very little known in Scotland itself." And we may add, that it is only known, if at all, through a false medium, viz., the speculations of benevolent visionaries, with Dr Chalmers at their head, or the representations of those interested in the maintenance of the system, by selfishness, prejudice, or conceit. It is accomplishing something to be able, in any degree, to spread accurate information regarding the operation of this system, which may probably be best done by exhibiting it at work in a variety of localities, selected so as to shew fair average results. We now start afresh with the southern extremity of Scotland, and, consequently, one of its best points.

The Border parish of Greta belongs principally to the Earl of Mansfield—an absentee, of course—and to Sir Patrick Maxwell. Both have given great encouragement to farmers, by enclosing fields, erecting excellent farm-houses, &c. &c. The raw produce of this parish is valued at £50,000. Some of the tenants pay £1000 a-year

of rent, and many £500. The population is 1909, of whom about 500 live in the manufacturing village of Springfield. The number of permanent and occasional paupers is thirty, who, among them, receive the average sum of £80 a-year, raised chiefly by the contributions of the heritors; which, we take leave to think, is no mighty burden on their rental, which, on the ordinary principle of taking the raw produce as three rents, must be about £17,000. But the rack rents of these times is as often to be taken at nearer half the produce. It may shew the spirit of some of the Scottish clergy, to quote the words of the minister of Greta, in relation to the slender fund provided for age, sickness, and destitution, in this rich parish. He remarks:—"The generality of the people regard such means of support as no degradation, and feel much inclined to force the heritors to a legal assessment, which can only be prevented by the firmness of the kirk-session, the unity of the heritors, and by their regularity in meeting and contributing according to the *real* wants of the poor. These feelings, on the part of the people, are mainly to be attributed to the practice of our English neighbours, whose standard of independence has been sadly lowered by the operation, or rather by the abuse, of poor-rates." Of course, this gentleman considers £80 a-year enough for the *real* wants of the thirty paupers of his parish: But if the people already regard the receiving of parish relief as no mark of moral or social degradation, is not their independence, according to this clergyman, and the vast majority of his brethren, already subdued, or gone; and under what system has it perished? Surely not that of compulsory assessments, and much less of an excessive provision. Surely their degradation is not to be measured by what they actually receive, but by their avidity to obtain; and the paupers of the parish of Criech are as much, we should say more, degraded by receiving their pittance of 1s. in the year, as those of any southern parish by receiving at triple the rate in the week. We must remark that, as in other cases, the amount distributed among the poor of Greta, and the rate of allowance, appears considerably larger in the Report given in to the General Assembly than in that published in the Statistical Account; which discrepancy is to be reconciled, we suppose, by the Report referring to different years. From the Assembly's Report, the parish appears to have been legally assessed since 1800; though the clergyman speaks of the "voluntary contributions of the heritors" as the source of the £80 raised for the support of the poor. In thirty-four years, assessments had not waxed extravagant in Greta, when £80, on a rental of probably above £17,000, covered, on the average, the rate when the report was written in 1834.

Let us turn to a northern county:—In the parish of BANCORRY, DEVENICK, in Kincardineshire, there is a population of 2,588. The wages of labour are from 2d. to 2½d. an hour, with the addition of victuals in harvest. There is a friendly society and a savings' bank in the par-

ish. The character of the people is "devout and orderly;" they "observe the Sabbath, and are attentive to the duties of religion." There are, on the average, sixty-four paupers in the above population,—nor is this surprising; and for the support of those infirm, impotent, aged, and destitute persons, there are raised, by church collections, fines, dues, &c., about £135 a-year; averaging 1½d. a-day for every poor person—"An allowance," remarks their clergyman, "totally inadequate to their support; and, as we have no strolling poor belonging to the parish, it sets, in a striking point of view, the private charity of the community at large, and, more especially, of the working classes in whose vicinity the paupers are situated." Many Reports do the same; but all this charity of the poor to each other does not suffice.

The minister of another parish in Kincardineshire remarks—"There have been great improvements in farming in the course of the last forty years. Much waste land has been reclaimed, and the quantity of grain produced must be much larger than at the above period. *It does not appear that any improvement has taken place in the circumstances of the people of Johnshaven.* On the contrary, it is the testimony of the old residenters that poverty is gradually gaining ground. It is reported that, forty or fifty years ago, there were many in the village in easy circumstances: now the greater part of the families are nearly on a level, and comparatively few are able to assist their neighbours, to any extent, in times of affliction and bereavement." This is accounted for by depression and fluctuation in trade, the low rate of the remuneration of labour, and the hopeless dependency into which people, sunk into the lowest depths of poverty, and left without assistance, inevitably fall; and from which it ought to be one main object of a Poor Law to rescue them. The Report continues:—"When some of the more industrious were beginning to surmount the harassments of poverty and destitution, trade again became depressed, and the labouring classes must renew their struggles with hard toil and inadequate remuneration." The seafaring people of this village, by the failure of the herring-fishing and the expense incurred for nets and stores, have been as much reduced as the weavers. How, we would inquire, do the advocates of voluntary support of the poor propose to manage in such circumstances? The defective state of education, of moral training, of fireside education, in this parish, is deeply lamented; but are these destitute and hopeless people in a condition either to receive or convey the best blessings of domestic education? The population of the parish referred to has considerably decreased. In another parish of this county, Garvock, the population has also decreased, while the pauperism has increased: the former owing to "The throwing of two or three small farms into one, and the great farmers banishing their cottars, by taking from them their cottage and their cow."

But the same authority attributes the increase of pauperism, *first*, indeed, to old age, sickness, widowhood, and orphanage; but, *secondly*, "to the rapid disappearance of that honest spirit of independence which made them struggle hard and long with poverty before they would apply to the kirk-session." But do they not still struggle hard and long before they bend their spirit to solicit the pittance of from less than 4½d. to 1s. 3d. a-week, which seems the average rate afforded to the fourteen paupers of Garvock; and what, we again and again inquire, has banished or subdued the stubborn pride of independence in the bosom of the Scottish labourer? This gentleman repeats the cuckoo-song about the effect of legal assessment, which, in charity, we must believe, is often repeated in sheer ignorance, or from entire want of consideration. The value of the raw produce of this parish now amounts to £12,864 : 10 : 4; and has probably been doubled within the last twenty or, at most, thirty years. We are glad to find the minister of Garvock bearing nearly a solitary testimony against that vile and demoralising system of banishing male servants from "the *Ha'-board* to the *bothy*," where "they must eat as well as sleep by themselves." "It may," he says, "be advantageous in a *present* or economical point of view;" but what are the consequences? "Many of them are really hotbeds of irreligion, immorality, and vice; and consequently of mischief not only to the rising generation, but to society in general."

At times, though rarely, we meet with testimony to the fact that legal assessment has neither made the poor discontented nor less reluctant than before to come upon the poor-roll. This is the case in *Westruther*, in Berwickshire, among other parishes. In *Whitsome*, in the same flourishing county, the labourers read newspapers and periodicals; and, though "meanwhile contented, have an impression that their condition might be bettered." A most salutary impression, since it is based in truth. The cottages recently erected here are comfortable; but the old dwellings, as in too many localities, are "cold, damp, and in a miserable state of repair," owing to the non-residence of the proprietors, and the outgoing tenant being only under obligation to leave the cottages *habitable*; which may, it appears, mean something very inferior to comfortable pigsties; and, we may add, from the want of a proper idea among Scottish proprietors of what the dwelling of a labouring man and his family ought to be. In a country where, by statute, two apartments are considered sufficient for the schoolmaster, one may surely satisfy the ploughman.

In *Liberton*, a parish in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh, containing, in 1831, a population of 4,063, the annual value of the raw produce is £56,181 : 10 : 4. In 1835, the average number of persons receiving relief from the session was 139; in 1837, it had fallen to 110. The amount of assessment or voluntary contributions made by the heritors in aid of the other funds contri-

buted for the poor was, in the first year, 1835, £399 : 3 : 4½; in the next year, £497 : 5s.; and, in 1837, £350. These, it must be remembered, were dear and severe seasons, when labourers were long kept out of employment; so the assessment, if apparently heavy in these years, was in reality moderate when the wealth and productiveness, and, above all, the rapidly increasing rental of the parish, is considered. When the last statistical account was written, the real rental of Liberton parish was £10,000. It is now £28,000 a-year, or nearly tripled. But no one perceives any connexion whatever between the increase of a landowner's rents and his *pocket* duties to the humble co-operators in his increase of gain. The temporarily increased assessment of Liberton seems moderate enough in the peculiar circumstances; yet the minister, who is haunted by the usual bugbears, and talks of "drying up the sources of Christian charity," and about the "delicacy of the poor," acknowledges that voluntary contributions are "only practicable in small parishes, with an efficient minister and staff of elders." Now we would point to the small parishes of Ruthwell, Kirkhill, and Kilmenny, which we have noticed, and which (like hundreds) are precisely in the circumstances described: the population small, the clergymen, for generations, the most efficient that are to be found in Scotland, and their staff of elders of their own choosing; and inquire how has the principle of voluntary charity operated there? In what circumstances are the destitute of these parishes?

The population of the rich parish of Liberton are nearly all poor; only 207, of the population of 4,063, being above the rank of labourers; and in this 207 the whole of the farmers, teachers, shopkeepers, &c. &c., are included, some of whom cannot be very affluent nor even comfortable in their circumstances. The minister congratulates himself on the assessments being reduced, in the face too of a very severe year, to £350; but, while they have never exceeded 3½d. in the pound of rent, we conceive his satisfaction premature, in a parish where there must, along with, we doubt not, great vice and intemperance, be much real destitution, arising from no fault in the sufferers. The highest allowance to the paupers is £3 : 12s. a-year; the lowest, £1 : 6s., which is not higher, nor so high, as in many of the unassessed parishes in neighbouring presbyteries. In Borrowstounness, for example, which is unassessed, the highest rate is £6, the lowest £1 : 6s.; Whitburn, the highest, £5 : 8s., the lowest, £3 : 12s.; and these are both voluntary, though this rule does not generally hold. Indeed nothing can be more uncertain than the operation of the present poor law, which depends, not upon the necessities of the poor, but altogether on the dispositions of the rich residents, and the temper of the clergyman of the parish for the time being.

Berwickshire, as one of the Border districts, is imagined to be, like Roxburgh, Dumfries, and Selkirk, more liberal than the midland

counties, in the relief afforded to paupers: but where the parish is under the voluntary system, we see little to warrant this belief. In *Cranshaw*, a thriving parish, the minister (for the good of the poor, no doubt) proposed, several years since, to do away with the legal assessment; a proposal which, he says, and we can well believe, was thankfully accepted by the heritors. Under this regenerated state of Cranshaws, three poor old bodies, in a population of 136, get each 1s. 6d. a-week. In Longformacus there are two old women, who are regular, and four who are occasional, paupers. Eight pounds being the annual amount of the church collections, this, and the interest of £100 mortified, are divided among the poor; the old women getting 1s. 3d. a-week, with house-rent and firing, which may probably reach another 6d. a-week. The real rental of the parish in which £8 a-year is collected for the poor on the voluntary principle, is nearly £4,000. John Home Home, Esq., is the principal heritor. The population, among whose paupers the £8 and the interest of the benefaction is divided, amounts to 425. Fuel, from the locality, must be dear; the cottagers, as is general in all the highly-improved districts, have not an opportunity to keep a cow, and the wages are about the rate we have already specified.

In the parish of Eccles, a highly-improved parish of Berwickshire, there has been what is called a legal assessment from 1763.* Since then, the real rent must be at least trebled; for it is nearly doubled since 1793. It was then £11,000; it is now £20,000. The population of Eccles is 1885; and, on the rental of £20,000, the assessment cannot fall very heavily; as, for thirteen months in 1830-31, we find the rate levied £270 : 9 : 1, which sum is divided among fifty paupers.

The highest rate ever known was in 1819, when £416 were levied, but for twenty months' rates. The minister of Eccles assumes, somewhat gratuitously, that "assessment produces here, as wherever it has been introduced, a carelessness of providing for old age;" while he asserts that "the highest spirit of independence is exhibited by many, so long as nature will endure." Does not voluntaryism tax nature and independence of spirit somewhat too far?

In an admirable account of the parish of *KILMARNOCK*, written, for Sir John Sinclair, in 1790, by the two ministers of the parish, we find some excellent remarks on the management of the poor on the voluntary principle. The population was then 6,776 persons; of whom eighty were permanently on the pauper roll, besides occasional paupers. The population is now 18,033; and of these 857 are paupers, comprehending all classes, permanent and occasional, lunatics, &c. In such a population the occasional poor must be very numerous. The poor, in 1790, received, from the church collections and a little interest of money, from 6d. to 1s. each, a-week; which, as was then remarked, "is by no means able to support them in their own houses, even

* The Report to the Assembly states the year as 1728.

when joined to any little labour which some of them have strength to perform. Begging, therefore is allowed, and is a very great burden upon the inhabitants." When the difference in the price of provisions is considered, the above allowance is fully equal to the average allowance to paupers in the majority of parishes up to the present hour; but the reverend statist of 1790 remarks—"The poor indeed will never be suitably or permanently provided for, until the proprietors of land agree to assess themselves in a sum that may be adequate to this purpose; and when it is considered that the greater part of the heritors are non-resident, that they contribute nothing to the maintenance of the poor by their own personal charity, and that the value of their property is greatly increased by the manufactures and population of the place, such a measure must appear, to every humane and benevolent heart, to be highly equitable and proper."*

Absenteeism, and large estates held by non-resident proprietors, are a frequent ground of complaint in the former Statistical Account. Now this customary state of things is seldom heeded.

The parish and town of Hawick is, we believe, generally adduced as a flagrant example of the tendency or danger of legal assessments to increase pauperism and undermine the moral feelings of the labouring classes; and as it cannot be considered quite so much as Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen, &c., a focus of destitution for a wide district, a stream of human misery increased by hundreds of tributary rills, we shall examine its condition so far as we have the necessary data. Hawick, the seat of a considerable manufacture, a Border parish, and, consequently, tainted by the evil example of England, has been legally assessed for the poor, for more than a century. The assessment was, probably, as in most cases, resorted to during some period of severe distress. The minister of the parish, in his recent report, conjures up an appalling apparition to heritors and rate-payers, when he states that about 120 years ago, (1727,) when the population, now 6,000, was probably not above 2,000, the poor, without the benefit of a compulsory assessment, got just about nothing at all, or £22 : 13 : 10 among their number; whereas, in 1837, the poor-rates of Hawick amounted to

£1009 : 9 : 9. This in figures, no doubt, looks formidable; and the reporter at once attributes the increase in 120 years, and in a manufacturing town, which may be called the creation of the last forty years, to "the influence of a compulsory assessment." But so early as the year 1772, when the population was about the one-half of what it now is, and the value of money much greater than at present, or, what comes to the same thing, provisions one-half cheaper, the assessment was £224 : 14 : 3. This assessment was levied upon the landward heritors and the proprietors of heritable property in the town, as is still done. The allowance to the poor approximates somewhat nearer to the practice of England than in the midland and northern counties. In Hawick, the lowest allowance to permanent paupers is £2 : 12s. a-year, and the highest £11 : 14s; but in all cases of so high a rate as from £5 to £10, or more, we are to keep in mind that the allowance is for a family, and probably a large family, not for an individual.

The voluntary contributions and church collections in this town are very small, considering the population; and the number of occasional paupers, as in all towns, liable to be affected by fluctuations in trade, is great, nay, we should say, excessive, were we not aware of the destitute condition in which poor families leave the rural parishes, or come from Ireland and the west, to flock to the spinning-mills and other works of such towns as Hawick. In 1837 the poor on the permanent roll were 147, but the occasional poor were 524, or in all 672, among whom were divided £1009 : 9 : 9, after deducting the expenses of collection, and £10 : 10s. paid for the education of poor children. But, in looking to the increased numbers and expense of the poor, we must also look to the increased population and means of the parish, and to the special circumstances in which it is placed; and bear in mind that, in the rural parishes of the south, assessments have not increased in the same ratio as in Hawick, nor indeed increased at all, farther than the alteration of values fully accounts for. Had the manufacturers of Hawick continued to hold the same proportion to the agriculturists as in the year 1772, the present increase of paupers would indeed have been alarming. But the rural population of the parish has rather decreased, and the sole and great advance has been in the town, in which about double the number of families are now employed in manufacturing that were employed before the Peace. The rural produce of the parish has also been greatly increased, and, consequently, the rental. But, again, by the Statistical Account of 1791, the paupers were 110 on a population of 2,928; so that the increase of their numbers is not so alarming, especially when we take into view that the years specified (1835, 1836, and 1837) were seasons of depressed trade, concurring with a rising provision market, from bad seasons. In 1791, the fund raised by assessment for the poor was £370, when manufactures were comparatively in their dawn, and when there was ample employ-

* The minister of Kelso, in referring to the manner in which the aged and infirm, when past their labour, are "driven" from many of the country parishes into the towns, emphatically repeats, "Driven, though a strong term, is but too aptly applied in this instance. To prevent the aged and infirm from becoming burdens upon the poor rate, it is the practice of some of the heritors, of purely landward parishes, to demolish every cotter house which is not absolutely necessary as accommodation for the needful complement of farm-labourers and country artisans. In this way, infirm labourers and widows are compelled, the moment they cease to be available workers, to leave their parishes, in despite of all the ties of local attachment which may bind them to the spot, and to take their chance of an uncertain livelihood among strangers, and in the unhealthy lanes and closes of a town." This reverend gentleman expresses his astonishment that "the aristocracy can be so dead to the claims of humanity."

ment for old women, now so frequently paupers, in spinning both woollen and flaxen yarn in their own houses. To view the change aright, which Hawick has undergone since the assessment for the poor, which was lately £1009, amounted only to £224, we may notice the fact, that letters about that time were brought to Hawick from Jedburgh by a common hawker once a month, and exposed on a stall in the market-place; whereas, the revenue of the Hawick post-office, in 1838, was about £1000; and four mail-coaches, besides other coaches, were plying through it every day. It is idle to look only at one class of facts. The increased prosperity is fully as astonishing as the increased pauperism of the town, for which there are, besides, many causes to which we shall not now advert; such as, restrictions on trade, the bread-tax, and the burden of our immense and unequal taxation. We should be sorry to regard pauperism as a necessary consequence of prosperity. The remarks of the ministers of Kilmarnock, cited above, are applicable to Hawick, and to every town in the same condition. The increased manufactures of Hawick must have greatly tended to increase the rents of the heritors of this and the adjoining parishes, both by the demand for rural produce and for the wool employed in the manufactures. Nor have we a doubt that Hawick, from its position, and the facilities for employment to children, which the factories afford, is made to bear part of the burden which, under other regulations, should fall upon the neighbouring parishes from which destitute families, or such as are liable to sink into pauperism, remove. Nor are the people themselves free from blame, if we receive their character as it is given by the minister of the parish. They frequently marry improvidently; and a number of the operatives "work only as many days of the week as is necessary for gaining a bare livelihood;" which seems very singular, as they are not charged with intemperance. We can comprehend the desire and the necessity for fewer hours of labour in every week, but not for whole days of idleness. We are not told the rate of the wages of the manufacturers; but few of them can have deposits in the savings' banks: and the heads of families "frequently" desert their wives and children, leaving them totally unprovided for, a burden on the parish. Where this unnatural act occurs frequently, there must be something radically wrong in the social as well as in the moral state of the working people.

The town and parish of Galashiels, which might be expected to assimilate in condition to Hawick, is represented in a much more favourable aspect, as respects the habits of the operatives and the condition of the poor. The paupers are supported by an assessment, in addition to the church collection and occasional donations.

An objection which the minister of Galashiels expresses, and one which all Scotch ministers naturally feel, to assessments, is, that they tend to diminish the *Offering*, as the church collection is

technically called. The amount of the *Offering* is a kind of test of the popularity of the preacher; who, besides, enjoys the patronage, or the doling of it out. In different parishes, the ministers have even attempted to do away with assessments, or, as the minister of Penicuik says, "to act on Dr Chalmers' views." In the particular instance of Penicuik, the kirk-session, that is, in other words, the minister, was thwarted. The assessment of Penicuik is now laid on the real, not the valued rent, and the poor are reported to be well managed, and receive from 5s. to 8s. a-month for their support.—The menace of legal assessment is occasionally held out to excite tardy heritors to co-operate with the kirk-sessions.

In Mauchline, a sort of legal assessment had been resorted to in 1770; but the £32:10:10, which the heritors gently laid on themselves and their tenants in aid of the church collections of £50, is considered by the minister, in his report in 1793, as quite inadequate to the wants of the poor. Even with the assessment, he alleges "that it must be obvious to everybody that, according to the present mode, the burden of maintaining the poor is most unequally divided: it falls almost entirely on tenants, tradesmen, servants, and charitable persons attending church; while other people, however rich, particularly non-residing heritors, contribute little or nothing to the charitable funds of the parish. Hence there is, in general, ample ground for the common observation, that '*It is the poor in Scotland who maintain the poor.*'" And this is quite as true as when this was said fifty years since. This is, indeed, according to some of its sentimental admirers, the very beauty of the system. The ministers of that period were often desirous of an equalized burden. Thus we find the minister of Burntisland describing £1:5 to £2:10s. a-year as very inadequate to the support of the poor fifty years ago, and suggesting an equal compulsory assessment, which could compel people to pay "according to their ability, whether inclined to be charitable or not."

We may glance for an instant at the comparative state of the labourers and paupers of one or two parishes, in 1793 and at the present time.

In Holywood, Dumfriesshire, the allowance to orphans and the infirm was, in 1793, £4 a-year, for which they were boarded out, when barley was 2s. 2d. and oats 1s. 10d., the Winchester bushel; meat of all kinds, namely, beef, lamb, veal, pork, of the best qualities, 3½d. a-pound, and butter 9d. the pound, of twenty-four ounces, and other articles in proportion. The wages of a labourer, in Holywood parish, were then 1s. a-day, from the 1st of March till the 1st of November, and 10d. in the winter months. Mowing was paid at 1s. 8d. a-day; women at peats 8d. Artisans had from 1s. 8d. to 2s. a-day. This rate of wages in 1793 is, in relation to the price of provisions, much higher than wages at present; and so was the parish allowance. The highest rate now given to two of the poor only is £4:4s., lowest, from 8s. to 14s. a quarter.

Since 1790, the rental of this parish has risen from £3,000 to £7,436. But it may be said that the low poor-rate must be owing to the increase of the number of paupers: we shall see. The paupers in a population of 736, who were in better circumstances than the working class can be now, when the price of provisions has advanced so much, and the price of labour remained nearly stationary, were fifteen. Now, in a population of 1066, there are only sixteen paupers, six of them above eighty years of age, and three above seventy, who are supported by voluntary charity. But, in addition to the above stated allowance, they get some coals in winter; making in all, by the General Assembly's report, £5: 4s., for the highest rate, and, for the lowest £1: 4s. With these facts, we need not farther point out in how much worse a condition both able-bodied labourers and paupers are in Holywood than they were fifty years ago; yet they were not well off then, and they had fairly entered upon potato diet. The whole fund for the maintenance of the destitute, infirm, impotent, or orphaned in Holywood, with its rental of £7,436, and its produce doubled, is £74 a-year; part of which is derived from former squeezings, ordinarily denominated surplus collections. The wages of labour, and the diet of the labourers, are not noticed in the New Statistical Account of the parish; so that we can only judge, by the reports of the adjoining parishes. The low price of Irish labour, or the want of a poor law for Ireland, until it came almost too late to secure the desired advantages, has tended to depress wages over all Scotland, but especially in Dumfriesshire.

In former periods, when it was discovered that the "noblespirit of independence," which Scottish heritors cherish so fondly, had fairly driven the poor, in times of scarcity, to live upon nettles and potatoes, the alarmed parochial authorities rushed to the rescue. In the former Statistical Account, we read of a poor householder in the parish of Linton who was discovered living on "the root of famine;" against which hungry diet the Scottish peasantry long entertained a strong and just prejudice, partly because they had not discovered the immense quantity of potatoes* which must be consumed where they are the sole diet, or nearly so, and compared the unsatisfying quality of potatoes with the same bulk of oatmeal porridge. The poor householder's awful case was reported to the minister, who seems to have been prophet, priest, and king in the parish, and who permitted no paupers in his dominions. A supply of oatmeal, and a little port wine, were sent to the starving man, whose misfortune was, as we apprehend, not eating potatoes, but having too few potatoes to eat. He very graphically described his own condition:—"He had an overcasting at his heart; and his nights were aye ready to lose the

staff:" still common symptoms, we are afraid, among the poor of Scotland. In the New Statistical Account, we find a gentleman attributing the decrease of ague in some localities, not to drainage, which is generally the cause assigned, but to the increased plenty in the daily diet of the poor from the use of potatoes. He does not advert to any cause for the increase of the famine-fever, typhus, among the poor. In the former Statistical Account of the parish of Dornoch, we find the clergyman, whose opinions in favour of assessments we formerly quoted, after enumerating the diseases to which the poor were perpetually liable, saying, "*All this seems to arise from cold, poor diet, comfortless lodgings, and scanty fuel.*" The poor of Dornoch are still in the same condition.

Fifty years since, we find the minister of Kiltarn, in Ross-shire—a favourably situated, and even then a very productive, parish—complaining that the whole fund for the support of about 100 poor, in a parish in which there were, at the time, ninety-six widows, and of which the population were 1616, was but £15, from which something was deducted for official fees. "How small a relief can this afford," he observes, "when there are usually above 100 persons on the poor's list, with every claim to charity that indigence can give them?" We have no doubt whatever that the produce and rental of this parish must have increased in the same ratio as in the neighbouring parishes of Contin and Knockbain noticed below. Lying along the side of the Cromarty Frith, it possesses even greater local advantages than either of them. What now is the condition of its poor, of its present eighty-three paupers, under the voluntary system still flourishing? It is somewhat better than when the above complaint was made; for £30: 4s. goes yearly to their support, or less than 4s. a-year each to those now on the roll.

In the end of the last century, in the rural parish of OATHLAW, in Forfarshire, in a population of 430, there were but two paupers, and these old women, widows. In that parish, in the quaint phrase of the parson, there were then "neither brewers, beggars, bankrupts, nor bastards;" and "*every family brewed their own ale.*" The present population is 533; a spinning mill has been erected, and a number of small farms have been thrown into large ones; the wages of day labourers is about 1s. 7d., and that of farm-servants, by the year, from £10 to £12, with an allowance of milk and meal. The value of the raw produce of the parish, is £10,717: 19: 6. In this parish £19: 2s. is raised for the five paupers now on the roll, by church collections. There is, besides, interest on sums left to the poor, £9: 10s.; but the expense of maintaining a foundling and a lunatic, making the present expense £41, the heritors have handsomely agreed to make up the deficiency, "so long as these expenses remain on the parish." There seem to be eight or nine heritors of Oathlaw, but only one of them is resident. It is probable that the annual value of the produce of this parish, has

* The quantity of potatoes which an Irish peasant is accustomed to consume, renders him a "mighty eater" when better diet comes in his way. The farmers of the south of Scotland remark that the Irish reapers are "ill to fill;" and the Scotch reapers dislike eating along with them where there is a common allowance.

been trebled, and it has certainly been doubled since the last Statistical Account was written; but the provision for the poor has, in no instance, in Scotland, kept anything like pace with the increase of produce and the rise of rent. Many speculative economists would pronounce the expectation that it should do so, erroneous and dangerous.

Of seventeen parishes in the Synod of Aberdeen which turn up to us in the Report to the Assembly, in about the same page, and which may be assumed as the average between the comparatively liberal allowances of the south and the wretched pittance with which human misery is mocked and tantalized in the north, not one is assessed. In some of them, the highest allowance to paupers on the permanent roll is under 9½d. a-week, while the lowest vary from 1½d. to 5d. a-week. In other words, the paupers are allowed at the highest rate £2 a-year; while the lowest class graduate from £1 down to 5s. 6d. a-year.

In the Synods of Moray and Ross, the average is much lower; and this before we approach the *Ultima Thule* of Sutherland and Caithness, Glenelg, &c. &c. We shall now give a few northern examples, chosen almost at random.

In KIRKILL, a beautiful and fertile parish in the vicinity of Inverness, possessing many local advantages, and which has been under the fostering care of a hereditary succession of able and vigilant ministers, the highest allowance paid to permanent paupers—and we beg our readers to keep in mind how chary and reluctant kirk-sessions are to receive permanent paupers—is 14s. a-year; the lowest rate 6s. *Auldearn* in Nairnshire, the highest rate, 15s.; lowest, 3s. *Cawdor*, Nairnshire, highest allowance, £1; lowest, 5s. These are all unassessed, productive parishes, favourably situated, and immensely increased in rental, slowly as the provision for the destitute has crept on, or stationary as it may be.

On the other side of the Frith from the above places is Knockbain parish in Ross-shire, which may serve as a specimen of a parish in a state of rapid improvement; and where, as in almost all parishes north of the Forth, nothing from the beginning of time has ever been heard of in the shape of those compulsory assessments which “dry up the sources of charity in the hearts of the Christian people.” Since the first Statistical Account was written, the real rental of the parish of Knockbain, in Ross-shire, has risen from £2,500 to £6,000. The proprietors are five, and three are resident. There are sixty-three paupers, including all classes, among whom are distributed £24 : 2 : 3 a-year, obtained by church collections and sessional dues. Could not that £6,000 a-year of real rental reasonably and safely afford a little more to assuage the misery of the aged labourers of this parish, those whose toil and sweat have reclaimed its wastes and moors, and helped so largely to raise it to its present prosperous condition? The proprietors here are Sir Colin Mackenzie, Sir James Mackenzie, Mr Mackenzie of Allangrange, &c. &c.

CONTIN, a neighbouring Ross-shire parish, also advantageously situated, affords a pendant to Knockbain. When the last Statistical Account was drawn out, the rental of Contin parish was £1400; it is now £6,000. Of eleven heritors, only one, and we believe by far the largest proprietor, resides—Sir George Mackenzie. In 1831, the population was 2,023; the persons to whom parochial aid is given, the paupers, amount to forty-three. They “are maintained entirely by church collections; which average £7 : 9s. a-year; and, with some trifle more of interest, and the residue of a former legacy, afford the paupers, on the average, 8s. a-year.*

The pastor of this parish does not repeat the stereotyped reply, that “the people enjoy a fair share of the comforts and advantages of society.” He says, on the contrary, “Poverty has tended greatly to crush the social feelings of the people; they enjoy in a very limited degree the pleasures and advantages of society; yet they are, in general, not dissatisfied with their condition. . . . The poor do not apply for parochial relief until compelled by necessity, in any other case it is considered degradation.” This is as it should be; yet what is the aid when obtained?—less than 2d. a-week. Surely such parishes and proprietors have been tried long enough on the Voluntary system. As in other parishes, there are in Contin, among the poor, a great majority of aged single women.

Of the parish of Nigg, in Ross and Cromarty, the raw produce is worth £16,380 a-year, and is probably quadrupled since the last Statistical Account was written. The population is 1404, of whom sixty-two permanent and occasional paupers receive £30; which, says the minister, “The heritors have of late years been induced to give to the poor, who have no indisposition to take,”—ay, probably a great deal more. There seems to be a feud between the heritors and kirk-session of this parish; and we may remark, what holds nearly universally, that, while the kirk-sessions chose to half-starve the poor in their own way, without seeking anything from the heritors, the latter rarely interfere with their proceedings; but as soon as any considerable assessment is resorted to, the heritors begin to look sharp; no longer trust to the entire management of the kirk-session, but appoint hired persons for the express purpose of managing the funds raised.—Let us return to a midland county.

Of KINETTLES, in Fifeshire, the population is 547; the gross rental, £4,353 : 4s.; and the expense of maintaining the paupers, “where public begging is unknown,” exactly £28 : 6s. In viewing this enormous sum, the minister gravely remarks:—“In former times, the Scottish spirit could not brook the idea of seeking parochial relief; but this spirit of independence has now been pretty generally abated.” What can have

* It was Mr Mackenzie of Muirton, an heritor of Contin, who seconded Mr Dempster's resolution, at the great Edinburgh meeting, for crushing any inquiry into the condition of the poor, sanctioned by Government.

abated it?—not, certainly, the amount of relief afforded, nor yet the knowledge that the destitute, the infirm and sick poor are legally entitled to a maintenance? May it not be the general poverty which has lowered the Scottish pride—nay, the extremity of suffering? The beauty of the niggardly Voluntary system is, that it crushes the feelings and degrades the spirit of the poor, without materially relieving their necessities, or operating favourably upon their habits.

LOGIE PERT.—Real rental, £5,000. Wages of labour, 1s. 4d. in winter—in summer, 1s. 8d.; wages of men at the spinning-mill from 10s. to 12s. a-week. Population, 1336. In this parish, fifteen paupers receive an average allowance of 1s. a-week; and fifteen more, occasional assistance, which comes to less than 6d. a-week. The maintenance of two idiot paupers costs £7: 16s. each. In all £90 is raised for the poor, in church collections, seat-rents, mortcloth dues, &c. &c.; of all which dues and fines, it is to be borne in mind, that a considerable part comes from the poor themselves.

Parishes in circumstances like the above are so general, that the examples need not be multiplied. We therefore close them.

Lest it should be said that our northern selections are invidious and partial, we shall now endeavour to give as succinct an account as possible of the condition of the working classes and the destitute in a few more of those parishes of Scotland, which may be considered, from the improved agriculture, increased production, and rise of rent, as in highly favourable circumstances.

In Kirkpatrick Fleming, Dumfriesshire, where there is a compulsory assessment, the rental is £7,369, on which is levied £110, or 3½d. in the pound, for the maintenance of thirty paupers, out of a population of 1666 persons; but £30 additional are raised by the collection at the church door. Once for all, we would remark, that, in general, wherever legal assessments are introduced, the allowance to paupers seems rather more adequate to prove a help to the subsistence of a civilized being, in civilized society, than in the Voluntary parishes. We would also request attention to the large proportion of aged female paupers in all the rural parishes of the midland and southern counties, owing, in part, to the failure of hand-spinning and knitting, in consequence of the introduction of spinning-mills and stocking-frames, the discouragement of marriage caused among the considerate labourers, by the general poverty and the comparatively low rate of wages, and from destitute old men being more frequently harboured in the towns, whither they have gone in quest of employment, which feeble old women have no chance of finding, and so linger on in starvation.

In Dornock, in Dumfriesshire, there is a legal assessment, which must be considered moderate. The annual value of the raw produce of the parish is £11,450. The population is 753; of whom twenty-two are paupers, receiving, on the

average, 1s. 1d. a-week, for which £66 is levied by the assessment; £11 being obtained by the church collection. This does not seem excessive in a parish in immediate contiguity with the pernicious example of England. Upon the real rental of £3,300, it is nett 4½d. a-pound, or less than one-third of what is levied on the rate-payers of the city of Edinburgh, and not much more than a third of the poor-rate in all the towns where compulsory assessments are raised.

In one unassessed parish of Dumfriesshire, orphans and old infirm persons without relations are boarded out at the very reasonable rate of £4 a-year. Besides the parochial relief, paupers here receive "frequent supplies of food from charitable well-disposed persons." That is, for want of a compulsory assessment the burthen is shifted from the shoulders of those who should bear it, and who are best able to bear it, and laid upon their more generous neighbours.

The rent of Torthorwald parish, was, at the period of the last Statistical Account, £1850; it is now £4,765: but the farmers do not appear to have thriven along with the farms. "Then," says their minister, "most of them were saving money; but at present very few of them can do more than maintain their families and pay their rents." The Marquis of Queensberry and Sir Robert Grierson of Lag, are the only heritors, and neither of them reside in the parish. In 1791, the population was 660. It is now 1320, or just doubled. At the earlier period, there were five paupers; now there are twenty-one, of whom seventeen are old women. At the early period, the five paupers got only £1: 2s. each; but, at that time, as the minister, who seems to have much consideration for the poor, remarks, "Lint was grown in the district, and spinning gave profitable employment to many persons, and particularly to old women, and enabled them, in a great measure, to maintain themselves." For the spinning of former times, the elderly female peasantry (those who, while young and vigorous, could, when employed, earn 10d. or 8d. a-day at hay, turnips, or harvest work) have now no substitute; and how is it possible, that these women, from their early industry, and with almost invariably aged parents, or orphan nieces and nephews to assist, can make any provision for old age? The twenty-one paupers of the present day, of whom seventeen are females, receive, on the average, £1: 17: 1½ each; to which the two non-resident proprietors do not appear to contribute one farthing from their increased rental, or ever to have contributed. The £39 distributed among the four male and seventeen aged female paupers in the parish, where rent has risen so much, comes from the church collection, and the interest of bequests made to the poor. Wages here, and over all Dumfriesshire, are rather low; provisions are at the same rate as in the town of Dumfries. The poor people of Torthorwald have the advantage of being near the Lochar Moss, where, by their own exertions, they may obtain fuel cheaply; but to counter-balance this comes house-rent; and the obser-

vations of the minister of Terthorwald applies to many places in Scotland. "The yearly rent of labourers' cottages, is from £1 to £5 a-year. Those at the lowest rent are miserable hovels; and the rent of the best, places them beyond the reach of labourers, or even common tradesmen." When the last Statistical Account was written, the rent of such cottages was, on the average, 13s. The modern rent alone of a tolerably comfortable dwelling, would cost a fourth part of the whole yearly income of the modern tenant.

KIRKMAHON, a highly improved and productive parish, immediately adjoining Dumfries, may be presumed favourably situated as respects the labouring class. The population of the parish in 1831, was 1601. The number of paupers on the roll is twenty-eight; but, fifty years ago, when the population was much less, the number was twenty-two; so that pauperism has either been kept down by a process of compression, well known to kirk-sessions, or from less stringent causes. There is no assessment; but from the church collections, and that blessed relief of the oppressed Scottish heritors, whose faces are grinded by the poor—the interest of mortgaged money, taken altogether, the paupers receive, on the average, nearly a shilling a-week. The rental of this parish is from £9,000 to £10,000, of which not a farthing has ever gone to the support of the main producers, when fallen into infirmity, destitution, and old age. Yet the poor of this locality are waxing rather audacious, according to the report of their pastor; and "Some poor persons have been heard to say, The rich are obliged to maintain the poor." He, however, on the other hand, insinuates a threat of impending assessment, if the absentee proprietors do not voluntarily contribute their mite. As a *bonne bouche*, we have reserved the parish [of St Mungo, which its worthy pastor seems to consider quite a model parish for the proper management of the poor.

PARISH OF ST MUNGO, DUMFRIESHIRE.—The real rental of this parish, in 1746, was £373; in 1794, it had risen to £1800. It is now £4,000. When the last Statistical Report was drawn up, there was a population of 640, of whom eight were paupers. There are now 791 of a population, of which twelve persons are paupers. But the kirk-sessions of Scotland have an infallible recipe for depressing the number of paupers. They, according to the Scottish proverb, "cut their coat according to their cloth;" and their cloth is scant. In St Mungo the sole support of the occasional paupers—for it is boasted that no permanent paupers are admitted on the roll—arises from the church collections. Not a sixpence is levied from the ten times increased, the £4,000 real rental. But we shall use the words of the worthy incumbent, who should best understand the subject, having first mentioned that St Mungo is one of those parishes still but recovering from that state of painful transition occasioned by the ejection of the small tenants, and the consolidation of farms. The minister notices, "that one tenant, at present, rents a

farm, which, not many years since, gave employment to six tenants and their families." But, notwithstanding the condition of matters which this fact indicates, he states that "no individual has ever had adjudged to him a regular aliment; and, when such is given, the pauper is allowed 1s. 6d. to 2s. 6d. per week;" which fund arises, as we have stated, wholly from church collections, amounting to £22 a-year. The small sums allowed are laid out at the discretion of the kirk-session, in house rent, in giving work to poor women, or in educating the children of the so-called paupers; and "direct payment in money from the sessional funds" is never resorted to, if possible. In this parish destitute poor women are occasionally employed "in gathering stones, and filling carts on the parish roads, at a fixed rate, and, in all probability, at a very low rate; and labourers employed on these roads are paid 2d. a-day below the usual price of labour, "to make the fund last as long as possible," and to get, it might be added, as much parish work as possible done below the ordinary rate of wages, thus injuring all the other labourers in the neighbourhood. The opportunities which the labouring poor of St Mungo have to lay by in youth a provision for old age may be gathered from the rate of wages, which, for male labourers, is 1s. 2d. a-day in summer, and 1s. in winter; for women, 8d. a-day in summer, and 7d. in winter; of course, without food. Fuel is dear in this parish; and St Mungo seems to be placed under a singular by-law, the heritors being the legislature, and the Executive the minister; which law we consider not a little questionable. It is certainly not the law of Scotland. Though the said heritors are not legally burthened one farthing for the support of the poor, they have, in his own words, "empowered the minister to object to any individual or family acquiring a residence in the parish, whom he might judge likely to become a burthen upon it;" a strange enactment in the peculiar circumstances, but one upon which the minister has acted so effectually, that he is now enabled to boast that the system operates so well that, during his incumbency, "The poor have been not only comfortably (?) supported, without any aid from heritors, but he has laid up a sum which, under judicious management, will render any assessment for the poor unnecessary." The minister of St Mungo is entitled to the thanks of all the heritors of Scotland. When destitute persons from that parish are found burthening the charitable, or swelling the ranks of pauperism in other parishes and towns, the law of the parish ought not to be forgotten. Let any one seriously consider the condition of this one parish, held up by its clergyman as a pattern, and say if a compulsory assessment is not required for its poor? or if there would be any hardship or danger in a small per centage being levied on the vastly increased real rental of the parish, to mitigate still farther the sufferings of "extreme age or hopeless disease," to which we must consider 1s. 6d. a-week totally inadequate? Again we inquire, does ~~not~~

year, raised by voluntary contribution at the church door, bear any proportion to the increase of the rental of the parish? or, what is more to the purpose, do the wages of labour bear any proportion to the rise of provisions and of rent? And how is the equilibrium to be maintained? That rate of wages, it will be remembered, is 1s. 2d. in summer, and 1s. in winter. The minister of St Mungo in one place remarks—"The changes affecting the population of this parish are the union of small farms, the pulling down of cottages by the lairds, the exhausted state of peat-mosses, the high price of coals, and the general use of agricultural machinery." And to meet and alleviate all those enduring or temporary hardships come the £22 a-year of voluntary charity, and the labour on the parish roads, at which the poor find temporary employment at 2d. a-day below the low rate of wages known in St Mungo. But the work-people of St Mungo, also, are said "to enjoy a full share of the comforts of life; and, not meddling with politics, they are quite contented with their condition." We should have great doubts either as to their fair share of the comforts of life, or their perfect contentment; dull, torpid, and ignorant of their true interests and rights as ignorance and poverty may have rendered them. The minister of St Mungo makes another singular admission. The purity of morals, even after his long incumbency, is not remarkable. There are frequent instances of unlawful intercourse among the sexes in St Mungo, which we should not have noticed, save that their minister says, "They justify their practices on principle." They are, however, not very deeply imbued with the vice of poaching, save salmon in the river Annan,—which article, in spite of acts of Parliament, the Scotch cannot be taught to consider as property. The peasantry of Great Britain must be at a loss to decide whether the illicit intercourse of the sexes, pilfering, or poaching, is to be considered as the greatest sin; though, from the established relations between crime and punishment, they ought to regard poaching as by far the most heinous breach of the moral law. The minister of St Mungo seems to regret exceedingly the disuse of the penitential sackcloth, the black-stool, and the iron collar or gorget padlocked round the neck of the offender in church; and the fines for "even allowing a shirt to remain drying on a hedge during the Sabbath." "It was the holy discipline of our church," he adds, "which counteracted the tendency of the Book of Sports to heathenize that sacred day in Scotland." Altogether, the social and religious state of St Mungo is a study to the statist and the philanthropist. Pauperism is well kept under, but destitution and immorality abound, and the latter is "justified on principle."

Were "perambulating commissioners" to collect facts by local examination, we apprehend that the wages of labour would be found, upon the whole, considerably lower in Scotland than is generally imagined; and that the entire means of labourers' families are not comparatively larger,

if they be not positively less, than they were forty years since, when the wife of a married labourer appears, by a calculation frequent in the former Statistical Account, to have contributed to the gains of the family about 1s. 6d. a-week, by spinning and harvest work. The present minister of Largo states of his parishioners—"It argues well for their prudence and management, that with wages, as frequently happens, not exceeding 6s. or 7s. a-week, they are able to clothe, educate, and feed their families, pay their house-rent, and defray the necessary expenses. Their kindness to each other in distress, it is always gratifying to witness." The stipend of the minister, exclusive of an excellent house, averages about £300 a-year. The ill-paid emoluments of the parochial schoolmaster are about £55, and those of the two other schoolmasters in the parish about £40 a-year. This great disparity between the emoluments of the schoolmaster and of the clergyman is common to every Scottish parish; not that we consider the rural clergy of Scotland as by any means extravagantly paid, while the schoolmasters are certainly underpaid; though one can imagine that, on what would be considered poor wages by a London mechanic, they may still live. But by what process of calculation are we to apportion, in our wealthy and luxurious society, the wages of the labourers, the six or seven shillings, so as to meet the many calls upon it, and leave something against the days of sickness, and the infirmities of old age?

In the former Statistical Account, the clergyman often allotted the income of the labourer, and sometimes even shewed a saving at the end of the year.* In the New Statistical Account, so far as we have noticed, no clergyman has attempted this delicate office. In the above-mentioned parish of Largo, forty individuals, on the average, and of the class who maintain their families so respectably on their small wages, while in health and employment, eventually become paupers, out of a population of 2,567; and receive, as their average allowance, 1s. a-week, from a fund raised by church-door collections and mortcloth dues. The number of fatuous and insane paupers in this parish is remarkably large; and considerable sums have been, of late, collected *voluntarily* for their support; that is to say, relatively to the rest of Scotland, these sums are considerable: for, on the rental of the parish, the burthen is light indeed; and "the heritors," in the opinion of the minister, "most wisely refrain from resorting to legal assessments."

With one or two facts, gleaned from the late Report to the General Assembly, we shall close this article. The terror of assessment had led to the impression that, in assessed parishes, the number of the permanent paupers must be larger than in the unassessed parishes, where the rate

* These frugal documents are, in their way, great curiosities. They argue very little benefit to the excise and customs, and still less to manufactures, from the agricultural families. The total expenditure of such families, ranged at from £17 to £23.

allowed is so much smaller, as not to be worth asking. The very reverse is the fact. The paupers are fewer in the assessed parishes.

The average number of paupers, to the whole population of Scotland, is rather under three and a-half per cent. ; and is lowest in the assessed parishes. But the rate of allowance to paupers in the assessed parishes is nearly triple that of the non-assessed parishes; the former being £2 : 14 : 9, the latter £1 : 0 : 4 a-year. In the legally assessed parishes, the burden of the rate to each individual of the population is still only 1s. 4. $\frac{1}{2}$ d. Let us not be unduly alarmed.

Four times the number of children are put to school at the expense of the parish, in the assessed than in the non-assessed parishes ; and, consequently, much more interest is taken in these parishes, to form the children of the poor to habits of virtue and industry. This attention is another argument for legal assessment, deducible from the General Assembly's Report. In assessed parishes, education is, to some extent, employed as a preventive against incipient pauperism ; and, whatever be the motive, the effect must be good.

One of the most remarkable facts elicited by this and other Reports, is the increased value of landed property, and the rise of real rental as compared with the *valued* rent in Scots money. *A pund Scots*, or twentypence sterling, has now risen to £1, £2, £3, £4, £5, sterling ; and, in some situations, to much more. Scotland can no longer be called a poor country, though possessed of much less accumulated and diffused wealth than England, where commerce is of old existence. It is richer, as is observed by Dr Alison, than Wales ; where the rate paid by each individual of the population for the support of paupers is five times more than in Scotland, and

yet is not complained of. Considered in its agriculture, Scotland is now absolutely rich.

Of those who have gone along with us through the Statistical Returns of the condition of the poor in a fair selection of the parishes of Scotland, some may conclude that no farther inquiry is necessary ; that the report of the Scottish clergy, the administrators of the existing poor law, is quite sufficient to prove the necessity of a change of the system in principle and in practice. Others, with whom we agree in opinion, will feel the necessity, in the first place, of an immediate, searching, and impartial inquiry ; which can no more be efficiently conducted by the ministers and heritors of parishes, than any inquiry whatever by parties strongly interested. In the Report to the Government, lately made by the General Assembly, and in the Statistical Account, all the information is elicited which heritors and clergy are ever likely to give, if they be not brought before another open tribunal, and cross-questioned and sifted. In the meanwhile, their own spontaneous statements make out a strong case, in unveiling a system pregnant with every one of those evils which a well-considered poor law is meant to prevent or alleviate ; namely, extensive and extreme destitution among the innocent as well as the improvident and profligate ; mendicancy, vagrancy, recklessness of all moral restraint, juvenile delinquency, disease, and crime. The Statistical Account proves another fact : that the increase of the poor-rates in Scotland has nothing like kept pace with the national increase of wealth, and consequently not with the ability to pay them. That the poor-rates, or voluntary contributions for the destitute, never, at any time, bore any fair proportion to those means, is for future consideration.

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF MONTROSE.*

THOSE who are acquainted with Mr Napier's former work, "Montrose and the Covenanters," do not require to be told of his high-flown High-Church and Divine-Right ideas, or that his extravagant prejudice against the Presbyterians, which might be mischievous if not pushed to, and beyond, the verge of absurdity, is hence harmless or simply ludicrous. The present publication is essentially the former work, but corrected and improved by the addition of a great deal of curious original matter.

It is an unavoidable calamity that, when the seamy side of any tissue of grand historical events is turned to the light, there must, in general, be considerable abatement or qualification of our enthusiastic admiration for even the greatest and purest of public characters. It is, however, the duty of the candid and impartial historian to shew us the men as they were, and not as party-spirit and the eulogies of biographers represent them. Mr Napier is,

we are afraid, the very antipode of a candid and impartial historian. His party-spirit is delightfully vehement : one really sympathizes with his intense hatred of the Covenanters and rebels, were it but for the sake of an emotion ; and his eulogy is so cordial in its extravagance, that it is impossible not to participate, for the moment, in the feeling which it breathes.

Among the original documents, which Mr Napier has obtained, is the Diary of Sir Thomas Hope, the Lord Advocate of Scotland, during the troubles in the reign of Charles I. He considers the publication of the entire manuscript, which is the property of Sir John Hope of Pinkie, a desideratum in the national literature ; and if the whole is to be judged by the rare specimens given, Mr Napier is certainly in the right. The character of the Lord Advocate himself is a study, from the incongruous mixture of worldliness and fanaticism, zeal and timidity, spiritual pride, and the flesh rebelling against the spirit. Mr Napier, with several original papers of inferior value, has obtained a MS. history of Montrose's times, written by Patrick Gordon of Cluny, who

* "The Life and Times of Montrose." By Mark Napier, Esq., Advocate. Pp. 587 ; with Portraits and Autographs.