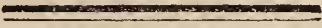


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THE PAUPER FARMING SYSTEM.



A

LETTER

TO THE

RIGHT HON. LORD JOHN RUSSELL,

His Majesty's Secretary of State for the Home Department,

ON THE

CONDITION OF THE PAUPER CHILDREN

OF

St. James, Westminster;

AS DEMONSTRATING THE NECESSITY OF ABOLISHING

THE FARMING SYSTEM.

BY

T. J. PETTIGREW, F.R.S. F.S.A. F.L.S.

*Surgeon to the Charing Cross Hospital, the Asylum for Female Orphans,
&c. &c. &c.*



“The vigour sinks, the habit melts away;
The cheerful, pure, and animated bloom
Dies from the face; with squalid atrophy
Devour'd, in sallow melancholy clad.”

ARMSTRONG.

LONDON:

T. RODD, 2, GREAT NEWPORT STREET.



1836.



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MY LORD,

It will, no doubt, be in your Lordship's recollection, that on the 2d of March last, I addressed a letter to your Lordship to acquaint you with the condition of the Infant Paupers belonging to the Parish of St. James, Westminster, and at that time in the workhouse in Poland Street. That this communication made known to your Lordship the fact of their melancholy state and the ravages that disease had inflicted among them;—that I was disposed to attribute this to the particular manner in which these children had been treated, and that notwithstanding the reports which had been made of the very sad condition of the health of the children, the Parochial Board had not taken those steps which the urgency of the case appeared to require, to put a check to the disorder with which they were affected, or adopt those measures which were calculated to arrest the progress of the fatality amongst them.

It was not until the evening of the 7th, that I received any acknowledgment of the receipt of my communication, when I learnt by an official letter from Mr. Phillipps, that the statement had been received and that your Lordship had “made a communication to the Poor Law Commissioners on the subject, for the purpose of obtaining any information which they may have received.” Not having received any notice to attend the Commissioners, and having

reason to fear that there existed a disinclination to look with promptitude and vigour into the matter, I ventured to make known through the agency of the public press, the grievance, which in my opinion, so loudly called for redress. I found no hesitation on the part of those concerned in the conducting of a liberal Paper, favourable to the Administration of which your Lordship forms a part, to attend to the calls of humanity; and, in the Morning Chronicle of the 12th March, some extracts from my letter appeared, which immediately drew public attention to the condition of these poor children. The officers of various Parishes, and the vestry clerk of St. James, expressed their anxiety upon the matter, in communications addressed to the Morning Chronicle of the 14th. The letter of Mr. Buzzard, the vestry clerk was as follows:—

To the Editor of the Morning Chronicle.

“ Sir,—A statement having appeared in your paper of this day, in the shape of extracts from a letter addressed by Mr. Pettigrew, of Saville-row, to Lord John Russell, commented upon by you, containing the most unfounded charges against, and attributing the basest motives to, the authorities of this parish, in their management of the pauper children—I am instructed to beg that your readers will suspend their judgment with reference to this subject, until the report of a Physician, who recently visited the establishment at Norwood, for the express purpose of investigating the causes of the disease among the children, has been obtained, when the authorities pledge themselves to lay a full and impartial statement of their treatment of the poor before the public, for whose information, in the *interim*, I am directed to add, that Mr. Pettigrew’s communication has been forwarded by Lord John Russell to the Poor-Law Commissioners, who have

inquired into *the facts* of the case, and declared themselves perfectly satisfied with the prompt measures pursued by the parish officers throughout this business.

“ I am, Sir, your obedient humble servant,

“ GEORGE BUZZARD,

“ Vestry Clerk, and Clerk to the Governors
and Directors of the Poor of the above
Parish.

“ 50, Poland-street,
Saturday evening, 12th March, 1836.”

As this letter expressly states the *satisfaction* of the Poor Law Commissioners upon their inquiry into the *facts* of the case, and as such a result could not but reflect upon me and tend to throw discredit on the statements I had made, I wrote to your Lordship on the 14th, to request a copy of the report of the Commissioners which appeared to my mind so much at variance with the *truth of the case*. To this communication I received a letter on the 16th, from Mr. Phillipps, which I shall here insert :—

“ Sir,—I am directed by Lord John Russell to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 14th instant, and to inform you, that he must decline at the present time to accede to your request of being furnished with a copy of the Report of the Poor-Law Commissioners, relative to the condition of the Infant Paupers of St. James’s Parish.

“ I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

“ S. M. PHILLIPPS.

“ T. J. Pettigrew, Esq.
Saville-row.”

This letter, it will be observed, bears the date of the 16th, and it will scarcely be credited that with this refusal it shall appear, that your Lordship did

on the evening of the 14th, in reply to a question asked of you by Mr. T. Duncombe in the House of Commons to ascertain “whether any inquiry had been instituted by the Poor Law Commissioners with reference to the case of the Pauper Children of the Parish of St. James, Westminster, farmed out at Norwood; and if so, whether on inquiry the statements of Mr. Pettigrew which had gone forth to the public, were borne out?” Your Lordship should say that you “could not answer the question from any formal report of the Poor Law Commissioners; but from information you had received, you must certainly say that it was not right to take for granted the statements contained in Mr. Pettigrew’s letter on that subject.”*

Now, my Lord, I ask you whether it is fit and becoming of your Lordship to avail yourself of your high position in the House of Commons to speak of a communication received under the circumstances in which mine was forwarded to you—relating to a subject of such great and painful importance—which regarded the health of the infant paupers, upon whose strength of constitution and physical powers the stability of this country, and the success of its commercial undertakings must so materially depend;—to speak of a document not before the House and not fairly enquired into—in this loose, and I must add, wanton and thoughtless manner? My Lord, Is

* This Report is taken from the ‘Times’ newspaper of Tuesday the 15th of March. The terms in which the answer is reported in other newspapers varies a little. The ‘Morning Chronicle’ makes Lord John Russell to say, that “it appeared that the whole of Mr. P.’s statement was not to be taken for granted:” and the ‘Morning Herald’ makes his Lordship to say, that “he had received information sufficient to say, that it would not be right to take for granted all that was in Mr. P.’s Letter.” The expression, though varying as to manner, conveys the same imputation.

this the courtesy due from a Minister of State for disinterested exertions to expose a public abuse? Is it the conduct of one gentleman to another? I answer no. I declare it to be no less an act than that of practising a deception upon the country—an unjustifiable attempt to throw discredit on my statement, and an impeachment of my veracity.

In the letter of the 2d of March I expressly told your Lordship, that I had no object in making the application to your Lordship but that of obeying the dictates of humanity; that I was attached to no party; that I never had engaged in the squabbles of the parish, nor ever attended a single parochial meeting; that I was even ignorant of the names of the officers of the parish; but that having witnessed a horrid spectacle, and finding a disinclination on the part of those* whose duty it was to look over and watch the poor, to do that which was absolutely just and necessary, I did not hesitate to make the appeal to your Lordship as a sacred duty imposed upon me as a man and a Christian. My Lord, I made this appeal to your Lordship, as one standing in a situation which enabled you to remedy so serious an evil, and I did flatter myself that these poor squalid objects, the hapless children of misery, would have found in your Lordship a powerful friend and protector. I stated nothing in that letter which has not subsequently been shewn to be true—aye, true to the letter. I defy any one to point out any personal or party object or feeling connected with it as respects my

* In speaking of the acts of the Board of Governors, here, and in other places in this Letter, I beg to be understood as alluding to those only who formed the majority. Several of the Members, some in writing, and others orally, protested against the continuance of the system pursued with respect to the Children; but they, unfortunately, constituted a minority of the Board.

exertions, and it would be well for others could they stand as clear of such imputations. I am now prepared to substantiate my letter, and to prove the entire truth of that document, all the statements contained in which, according to your Lordship's assertion, "ARE NOT TO BE TAKEN FOR GRANTED." But, before I go into this, I must direct your Lordship's attention to the conduct of your own Board of Commissioners.

That which will strike every unprejudiced person as most extraordinary in the conduct of the Board of Poor Law Commissioners upon receiving such a communication, forwarded to them by the Secretary of State for the Home Department is, that the individual upon whose authority these charges were made, should not have been called upon to verify his statement ; or that the churchwarden who applied to me professionally to see these children, should not have been examined by them. The neglect, in either case, could not have arisen from ignorance. Mr. Gibbs (the churchwarden) was mentioned to the Commissioners by one or more individuals as the person from whom correct information could be obtained. The Rev. Gerrard Thomas Andrewes mentioned Mr. Gibbs's name to the Commissioners. This humane and excellent man to whom when at the workhouse, I pointed out three or four of the wretched children states, that he wrote to one of the Poor Law Commissioners, and that he was in consequence requested by the Commissioners to give them some information relative to the children in the workhouse ; and when he saw the Commissioners, he told them, they should send for Mr. Gibbs, the churchwarden, Mr. Braine, the surgeon, and the overseers of the

poor. He specified Mr. Gibbs by name, and added, that he was *the most proper person to communicate with on the subject*. From whom did the Board seek information? From the vestry clerk—from the assistant overseer—from persons forming part of the board of guardians to whom the care of these children was entrusted—to those, whose conduct was the subject of investigation, and whose character was deeply implicated in the inquiry. And, to whom my Lord, did the Board of Commissioners entrust this important inquiry—this investigation into the nature and condition of the Norwood Establishment? Was it to the Assistant Commissioner Mr. Mott? Did not Mr. Mott formerly farm the poor of the parishes of Lambeth and Newington? Did not Mr. Mott formerly keep an establishment for the reception of Infant Paupers at Brixton,* similar to that now kept by Mr. Aubin at Norwood? Did not Mr. Mott even apply for the children of St. James's parish; and did he not receive a refusal, on account of the admixture of the adult and infant paupers, the small space allotted for exercise, and the flooring of his building being beneath the surface of the ground? Is this person to be considered as a disinterested agent? Can he be otherwise than prejudiced in favor of establishments, of which he has himself not only been the advocate but the proprietor? But, enough upon this head. Let me now refer more particularly to my letter, and see how fully the points embraced by it can be substantiated. The first statement made is that I was called upon professionally to visit some sick children in the work-

* I have heard that the children returned from Norwood are now to be sent to this establishment, and at a price below that which was paid to Mr. Aubin of Norwood.

house of St. James, forming a portion of a mass (about 80) that had been farmed out at Norwood. That is a position fully proved on oath at the inquest on the poor boy, George Coster. The term "farmed out" has been made the subject of a legal quibble, as, according to Mr. Adolphus's opinion, it implies persons undertaken to be fed, &c. at a certain price, for which, however, they are in addition to give their labour. The ordinary acceptation of the term is, I believe, of a different description, and I used it as applying to a contract or agreement entered into by the parish authorities for the maintenance, clothing, &c. of the children, to be furnished by Mr. Aubin. As to the labour to be performed by children of such tender age as from six weeks or months to seven or eight years, no person could for a moment entertain the idea; and as to labour to be performed by *these* children, the prospect of that is indeed very distant. I stated the sum at which they were to be provided with lodging, clothes, food, education, &c. including medical attendance and all other necessaries, was small. It was proved at the inquest to be 4s. 3d. per week.

My next statement is, that I found seventeen very seriously ill—that has not been attempted to be disproved, I shall not therefore enumerate them. The disease under which they all appeared to labour has been shewn to be, as I described it, of the same character—a deranged condition of the digestive or assimilating organs, or that part of the body through the agency of which all nourishment is derived for the support and growth of the frame.

The emaciated condition of the children has been fully shewn. The body of George Coster exhibited a spectacle, the remembrance of which will not easily

be eradicated from the memory of every one who viewed it. It has been sworn to at the inquest by a number of professional witnesses, that there was not, either internally or externally, one particle of fatty matter to be found—there was an *entire absence of adipose substance*. Emaciation is evident in various degrees in many now within the walls of the work-house.

My description of the condition of the children generally I have sworn to, and it is a testimony that has not been disproved in any one point, or even attempted to be refuted. I shall give an extract from my letter on this head :—

“ The picture is almost too horrible to describe. I found the children with large heads; tumefied bodies, shrivelled and wasted limbs—mostly in a sitting posture, with their legs crossed—and I found upon enquiring of the nurse of the ward No. 9, in which the greater number of the sick were placed, that any change from this position occasioned them pain, and caused them to cry. The continued posture to which it is evident they have been accustomed has given to many a curvature of the bones of the legs ; they have, in short, become ricketty from the want of exercise, and, I fear, an insufficient supply of wholesome nourishment. They labour under Mesenteric Disease in its various forms and stages. Some have discharges of blood and mucus ; some from fifteen to twenty evacuations daily—all suffering from extreme thirst, and now, that under the judicious advice of the surgeon of the parish, they are taking proper nourishment, they become flushed upon receiving it. The state of their skin marks the condition of the internal organs—it is dry and scurfy—in many places, both on the head and limbs, particularly the lower ones, *ulcerated*. Languid and feeble circulation, and other marks of general debility, are strikingly apparent. Their glands are enlarged—their bodies swollen and painful to the touch. Some I found in the greatest state of prostration. The sight was truly appalling.”

This relation is undisputed. I declared the disease to be Mesenteric. Has not all the evidence produced at the inquest upon Coster proved this? Did not the dissection of the body establish the fact? Did any one venture to give a different opinion? No one. What then was my course of reasoning upon these cases? I shall give it in the words of my letter:—

“It is quite clear that such an uniform character of disease among so many children, the offspring of different parents, must be the result of the particular manner in which these children have been nursed and maintained.” And, I added, “They are unfortunately too young to tell their own tale; but although their intellects are not sufficiently matured to give this information, their appearance and condition bespeak it but too powerfully. I do not hesitate to declare my firm belief that their wretched condition is the result of either an insufficient supply of food, or a supply of improper food, and a want of exercise. Either of these causes, or the combination of them, is adequate to the production of the effects it has been my unhappiness to witness.”

Every professional man of experience will, I am sure, admit the justness of these observations—every one acquainted with the diseases of children—having a knowledge of the structure of the human body—capable of detecting the differences between infancy and mature age, and of marking the alterations in texture which the various organs undergo at the different stages of existence, will at once see and admit the accuracy of my statement. But, I have not gone far enough. I ought not to have stopt short, as there are other causes which may operate in a very powerful manner in the production of disease among children. Bad air—impure air—air that has been breathed over and over again by the assembling

together of too great a number of children in one apartment; and I am informed by two physicians of high character and attainments (Dr. James Copland and Dr. Sigmond), both teachers of their profession, and distinguished by their publications, that in the male ward of Mr. Aubin's establishment there are no less than *ninety* beds; and that in each of these beds, according to the size of the children, two or three are placed to sleep. The congregation of so many children in one apartment, with the windows closed as they must necessarily be at night during the hours of rest, is highly improper and prejudicial to health. It is a fertile source of disease. Nearly 300 children sleeping in one room!*

I have said, that "it appears (and this I derived from my enquiries made when at the workhouse at the time I visited the sick children) that at Norwood there is an establishment where children from various parishes are farmed at a small price per week—that these children amounting to several hundreds, are associated together, and very inadequately supplied with the attendance of proper nurses; they are consequently deprived of the *quantum* of exercise which is absolutely necessary to the health and well being of the infant. Physiologists know full well that the principal energy of the nervous system of the child is directed to its voluntary muscles, which appear to be, in the healthy state, in almost perpetual action. Without exercise it is impossible for the functions of the body to be continued with due power and activity, and, if, in the growing child, where none of the

* I refer all who are anxious to know how productive of disease is the want of ventilation and the congregation of a great number of persons in one sleeping apartment, to the article "Age," in Dr. Copland's Dictionary of Practical Medicine, where the subject is treated in a most masterly manner.

organs are as yet matured, food be improperly administered, or be of an improper character, the secretions are thrown out of order, become vitiated, irritate the system, and produce universal disorder.”

This statement will be found to be fully proved by the evidence of Mr. Aubin and Dr. Lee. Mr. Aubin stated at the inquest, that he had the children of fifty-six parishes; and Dr. Lee says “the want of a sufficient number of experienced nurses has doubtless contributed much to extend and aggravate disease among the children.”

At the time my letter was addressed to your Lordship, Mr. Sasse, one of the overseers, gave me as the number of children then remaining at Norwood, 54. The number is I believe not quite correct; but that is not of consequence as it is merely mentioned to show that, notwithstanding the diseased condition of the children, they were still allowed to remain at the establishment, nor were they indeed taken away by the parochial authorities until Mr. Aubin declined to keep them any longer.

The only remaining statement in my letter to be noticed is that which relates to the conduct of the parish officers who, I assert, had repeatedly had their attention called to the condition of these infants—had received unfavourable reports as to their health, and who, I confidently affirm, did not take the decided steps they ought to have done, and at once checked the mischief by removing the children from a situation ill adapted to their tender years, and where the mode of treatment appeared to be attended with so unsatisfactory a result. These points I shall fully show from the reports of the board of governors, the accuracy of which I presume they will not attempt to dispute.

It appears that in the month of August 1834, the infant paupers were removed from Wimbledon* where they were placed at nurse, to Mr. Aubin's establishment at Norwood. On the 9th September they were visited by the board of guardians, or governors, (for this latter appellation seems much better suited to the mode of conduct adopted by the majority of them) and on this occasion they report, that "the healthy appearance of the children, as well as the general condition of the institution proved very satisfactory;" but in little more than two months from this time, namely, on the 19th of November, Messrs. Harrison, Branscombe, and Pitt, and Mr. Pennington, the acting overseer, accompanied by Mr. Braine, the parochial surgeon, visited the children "in consequence of the receipt of a letter from Mr. Aubin, and the *number of deaths* which had occurred among the children;" and Mr. Harrison reports "that William Gardener, the child named in Mr. Aubin's letter was dead, that several others were in a very doubtful state of health, and the other children generally in the establishment bore a very cold and uncomfortable appearance." On this occasion Mr. Braine, the surgeon, also reported "the unhealthy condition of the children with very few

* At Wimbledon the children were placed under a very excellent system. An elderly woman having a proper assistant, acted as nurse, and she was permitted to have only a limited number of children, not amounting to more than 12. Emulation was thus excited among the nurses as to the condition of the children entrusted to their care. If indisposed, they were immediately attended to by Mr. Bright, a practitioner in the neighbourhood, who received a regular salary from the parish to superintend the medical department at this place; and a report was regularly made by him, and also by the parochial surgeon, from distinct visitations, on the condition of the children, and these were sent in to the board every fortnight. At Wimbledon the deaths never amounted to more than 4 annually in an average of 140 children, whilst at Norwood they constituted AT LEAST 4 times that number.

exceptions, and the apparent want of a proper system of medical treatment and of judicious and comfortable accommodation for the sick in the establishment.” Two days only were permitted to elapse before another report is made, and it is now stated that the children “in general looked very well with the exception of 10 who appeared sickly,” and these were said to have been so when sent to Norwood and they were ordered back to the workhouse. Mr. Russell on this occasion reports “that he did not consider the establishment possessed sufficient accommodation for sick children.” At this meeting Mr. Braine (whose testimony must certainly be admitted to be entitled to more attention than that of the parochial officers on a question of health and the circumstances necessary for the maintenance of it) says, “that he remained of the same opinion as before. That the sick ward, tho’ improved, was still very uncomfortable, and that altho’ the children generally appeared better than on the previous visitation they were nevertheless not in health.” And, in reply to an observation made on the subject, Mr. Braine stated “that the children in the workhouse were generally healthy, while the girls in the Burlington-school were not well; but that the children at Norwood were looking worse than the latter. He considered the health of the children at Norwood to be below par.”

The reports of different visitations on the 26th December 1834; January 29th, March 6th, April 3d, and May 13, 1835, are all favourable to the condition of the children.* On the last occasion it is stated,

* But it must be remarked that during this time the surgeon repeatedly expressed his dissatisfaction at the condition of the children. This alas! passed unheeded.

that “ the general appearance of the establishment was very satisfactory and the result of their visitation altogether of a most gratifying nature.” After this report it will appear not a little extraordinary that on the 5th of July following, a most formidable report is presented, as the result of “ a strict and minute examination of each individual child,” and this report is signed by three most respectable governors, Messrs. Robson, Cater, and Peat. This document says “ Your Committee regret having to state that the general condition and appearance of the children was sickly and unhealthy, and in making this unfavourable report the committee beg to add, that the above observations are most particularly applicable to those infants and children of tender years placed in that establishment. The committee are, in justice bound to state, that it did not appear to them that the children were either badly fed or clothed ; but there was a manifest inattention and want of personal cleanliness, which above all other means of securing health and preventing disease is the most effectual and salutary. Several of the children are much afflicted with scald head and ring worm, and as they are all indiscriminately mixed in society together, the disease must necessarily spread its contagion to every inmate. Under that impression your committee felt it their duty to recommend to Mr. Aubin, the necessity of separating those so afflicted from the others, as the only effectual means of subduing the disease, and restoring the children to a natural and vigorous constitution.”

In consequence of this report, the board on the 10th requested another visitation to be made by two other governors, Messrs. Harrison and Aldous (as appears

by the minutes of the board,) accompanied by Mr. Peat. The report bears the date of the 24th, and is as follows :—

“ We, the undersigned, as requested by the Board of the 10th instant, having visited the pauper children belonging to this Parish at Mr. Aubin’s establishment at Norwood on Wednesday last, are of opinion, that the elder ones altho’ not in robust health, have on the whole a satisfactory appearance; but that the infants with very few exceptions are evidently out of health, and the undersigned cannot but feel that the establishment in question is not the place best suited for children of so young an age.

C. HARRISON,
Wm. ALDOUS.”

On this occasion, Mr. Peat bears testimony to “ a decided improvement in the health and personal cleanliness of the children,” but at the same time states it to be his “ duty to add, that the infants and younger portion of them are still weak and sickly, and appear to require judicious domestic treatment, and more care and attention.”

The next report bears date Sept. 15th, at which time it seems there were at Norwood, belonging to St. James’s Parish, 82 children; and of that number 20 were under five years of age, 20 between five and seven years, and the remaining 42 above seven years of age. Of the latter number it is said—

“ Your Committee are enabled to speak favorably, and by comparing the remarks of the former Committees, they consider an improvement has taken place in their general health and condition; and greater cleanliness having been observed, the complaint of scald head, with which many were troubled, has improved—as much as, from the stubborn nature of the

disease, could have been expected. But the children under seven years of age, (of which the former Committee reported 19 sick) your Committee are concerned to state are in no way improved, and still continue in a very weak and sickly condition; at least that number requiring, in the opinion of the undersigned, *immediate* removal; and many of the others, not returned as sickly, do not appear in such good health as when sent to the establishment. Your Committee, in forming the opinion that this place is unfit for children of tender years, and in recommending the subject to the serious consideration of the Board of Governors, beg to remind them of the mortality which has taken place between 2nd Aug. 1834 and the 9th Sept. 1835, viz.—Eight under the age of four years, and one above.”

(Signed)

M. MILEY,
G. A. MILLER,
GEO. HUNT.”

On the 24th of the same month the Board proceeded to Norwood, where they met Dr. Tweeddale, a physician selected by the overseers to inspect the children. The following is Dr. T.’s report:—

“ 87, St. Martin’s-lane, Leicester-square,
Sept. 24, 1835.

“ Sir,—Agreeably to the tenor of your letter, dated yesterday, requesting my attendance at Mr. Aubin’s establishment, Norwood, this day, to inspect the state of health and condition of the children there belonging to the parish of St. James, to the number of 80, I beg now to inclose you my report, and request that you will be pleased to lay the same before the Board of Governors of the Poor.

“ I find as follows—that of 46 boys residing at the establishment, 21 are in perfect health, 12 affected with scald-head or ringworm, but not in an infectious condition. I would, however, recommend their heads to be shaved, and

afterwards touched with a strong solution of lunar caustic, or strong sulphuric acid; *they are in a TOLERABLE state of health*; two are slightly affected with scabies, four have got mesenteric fever, six are in delicate health from strumous diseases, and one has got chronic ophthalmia tarsi.

“The girls, 34 in number, 19 of whom are in good health, eight slightly affected with scald-head (I would likewise recommend their heads to be shaved), three have got scabies, and three are labouring under mesenteric fever, confined in the infirmary, and one in delicate health from scrofula.

“By this you will perceive *that FORTY, or one-half of the children ONLY may be considered in a state of perfect health*; 20 are in a *TOLERABLE state of health*, with the exception of the ringworm; five with scabies, whose healths are only slightly impaired; seven are suffering from mesenteric fever, accompanied with enlargement of the glands; seven are rickety from scrofulous constitution; and one chronic inflammation of the eyes from the same cause.

“*I am decidedly of opinion that most of these diseases may be fairly attributed either to improper or deficient nourishment*, and would recommend that the elder children should be supplied with meat daily, varying the quality, such as roast meat, either beef or mutton, corn beef or pork, boiled or hashed mutton, broths, beef-steak puddings, &c.

“The dining and smaller bed rooms are not sufficiently ventilated, and would recommend more ventilators being placed on the sides of the building. I consider the situation of the establishment to be perfectly unexceptionable, but do not think the play-ground to be sufficiently extensive for the number of children.

“I shall be happy to answer any question the Committee may think proper.

“I am, Sir, your very obedient servant,

“J. TWEEDDALE, M.D.

“Senior Physician to the Royal Metropolitan Infirmary and the Royal Naval School.”

On the 27th Oct. Messrs. Russell, Taylor, and Pitt report the children, described by Dr. Tweeddale as in an indifferent state, to be much improved, and they add, “that the children, generally, excepting only in a few instances of common ailment by no means alarming, and nothing remarkable among so large a number, are in good health and condition.”

On the 11th Dec. Messrs. Habell and Sasse visited the establishment, and reported that they found “a decided improvement in their health generally.” Several of the children reported ill on the 24th Sept. are now declared “well, and others much better.” And, “of the total number of children belonging to this parish, viz. 83,” fifteen are said to be “in delicate health;” and, in opposition to their own physician, they state, “in our opinion the indisposition which prevails amongst those invalid children arises chiefly from constitutional weakness, and cannot be attributed to any neglect or defect in the management of the establishment.” From this report it appears Mr. Braine, the surgeon, entirely dissented;* for, immediately following it, Mr. B. says—

“The parochial Surgeon of St. James, Westminster, dissents entirely from the above report. There are about 80 children in this establishment belonging to the above parish, 20 of whom are sick and invalids.

J. W. BRAINE.”

The Board seem to have felt great dissatisfaction at the honest conduct of Mr. Braine, for they issued an order to prevent Mr. B. writing any further reports in the book kept at Mr. Aubin’s establishment.

* Mr. Pennington, one of the overseers, attended this visitation, and refused to add his signature to the favorable report of Messrs. Habell and Sasse.

On the 23rd Feb. 1836, it is reported that “ the acting overseer (Mr. Young) reported the steps he had taken in twice visiting the establishment at Norwood, accompanied by Mr. French (the resident apothecary), and directing the removal of those considered dangerously ill to the workhouse ; and Mr. French now attended this board, and gave his opinion as to the state of the children, by which it appeared that several others were in a delicate condition and evinced the same symptoms of disease ; and Mr. French further stated, that in his opinion the present condition of the children was attributable to the complaint not being sufficiently attended to on its early appearance, and to a want of experienced nursing ; and also remarked upon the low temperature prevailing throughout the establishment, which he considered had a tendency to bring on the disease.”

The last report to be mentioned is that of the rector, the Rev. J. G. Ward, Mr. Robson, and Mr. Graham, and it contains some important points. It is the result of a visitation on the 3rd of March, made in company with Dr. Robert Lee. This examination was conducted with great circumspection in the presence of Mr. Street, the medical attendant of the Norwood establishment. These gentlemen express the pain they felt on beholding the state of health of many of the children, and declare themselves against the “ elevated and exposed situation of the establishment,” which, they add, “ must, during the winter season especially, be injurious to the health of sickly and delicate children.” But the most serious part of the report is that which relates to the inexperience of the nurses, and the want of proper medical superintendance.

“ On the whole we are of opinion that the most defective part of the establishment is in the *nursing* of the children. We could not but take notice that the nurses, in their replies to the questions of the medical gentlemen, seemed to have a very imperfect knowledge of the state of health of the children, beyond the mere circumstance of their having or not having an *appetite*. We consider that disease may, in consequence, lay fast hold upon the children before it is perceived, which might in the first instance have been arrested, probably without much difficulty. We observed also, as connected with this subject, that the medical practitioner (a gentleman apparently of sense and ability) attends merely to those patients who are expressly brought before him ; whereas our opinion is, that he should be considered moreover as an inspector over the whole, examining and watching continually for the first symptoms of disease in any of the children.”

I have thus reviewed *all* the statements made in my letter, and I now call upon your Lordship to point out any one of them that has not been fully substantiated. There is not a tittle that can be disproved—that cannot be shewn to be true to the greatest extent. I have fully proved that the parish children were placed at an establishment at Norwood—at a small price per week for their clothing, feeding, education, medical attendance, and all other necessaries. That, according to the reports of the various committees of the governors of the board, of the dates of 19th November 1834 ; July 6th, 24th, September 15th, 1835 ; and February 23rd, 1836, the children have been reported seriously ill. That, according to the reports of November 19 and 21, 1834, by Mr. Braine, the surgeon, “ the apparent want of a proper system of medical treatment, and of judicious and comfortable accommodation for the sick

in the establishment," was announced to the board. That, according to the report of Mr. French, the apothecary, "the condition of the children was attributable to the complaint not being sufficiently attended to on its early appearance, and to a want of experienced nursing," and also to the "low temperature prevailing throughout the establishment, which he considered had a tendency to bring on the disease." That, according to the report of the 6th July, by Messrs. Robson, Cater, and Peat, the state of the children was "sickly and unhealthy;" that there was "a manifest inattention and want of personal cleanliness;" and that, according to the report of two other governors, Messrs. Harrison and Aldous, on the 24th July, the Establishment at Norwood was "not the place best suited for children of so young an age;" and again, of the same date by another governor, Mr. Peat, that "the infants and younger portion of the children appeared to require judicious domestic treatment and more care and attention." That, according to another report by three other governors, Messrs. Miley, Miller, and Hunt, on the 15th September, the children did "not appear in such good health as when sent to the establishment;" that, according to the report of the rector and two other governors, Messrs. Robson and Graham, "the most defective part of the establishment is in the nursing of the children," and that the medical superintendance is insufficient; and that, notwithstanding all this testimony by members of their own board, and by the surgeon and the apothecary of the parish, the majority of that board were so determined to pursue their *economical* system, that they never dreamt of

removing the children, although their condition was seen to deteriorate as early as between two and three months from their reception into the establishment—to get worse and worse, until their removal, since which time, by very judicious treatment, the health of many have been very much improved, as is now to be seen in the workhouse and elsewhere ; and if this evidence be not deemed positive and conclusive, I know not what will carry conviction to your Lordship’s mind or that of the Poor Law Commissioners, who, in Mr. Buzzard’s letter, are stated to have “declared themselves perfectly satisfied with the prompt measures pursued by the parish officers throughout this business.” And this brings me again to notice Mr. B.’s letter, in which (written by the instruction of the Poor Board) he calls upon the public to “suspend their judgment with reference to this subject, until the report of a physician, who recently visited the establishment at Norwood, for the express purpose of investigating the causes of the disease among the children, has been obtained, when the authorities pledge themselves to lay a full and impartial statement of their treatment of the poor before the public.” But, as this Board of Governors of the Poor have failed to lay this report of the physician before the public, I shall here introduce it, and a second one by the same able and competent physician, written upon a more mature consideration of the subject.

FIRST REPORT.

“Gentlemen,—In compliance with your instructions communicated to me last evening by Mr. Buzzard, I proceeded to Norwood this day, to inspect the children in the establishment

of Mr. Aubin. These children were individually examined by me, in the presence of the Rev. Mr. Ward, Messrs. Robson and Graham, and the two Medical Officers of the parish.

“ Of fifty-two children in the institution, I found only fifteen in a state of tolerable health. There were nine seriously indisposed, and the whole of the remainder were suffering from a deranged state of the stomach and bowels, with symptoms of scrofulous disease more or less apparent.

“ Respecting the causes of the unhealthy state of the children, it would be unsafe to pronounce an opinion, without a more careful investigation of them than it is possible for me to make in the limited period which has been allowed to draw up this report, and without examining the condition of the children in other institutions. In the meantime I would recommend the following children to be removed forthwith from Norwood to the parochial infirmary.*

“ I have the honour to be, &c. &c. &c.

“ ROBERT LEE, M.D.”

“ March 4, 1836.

“ Gentlemen,—Having examined the children with Doctor Lee, and seen his report to the Governors of the Poor, it would be mere repetition to state the facts which he has laid before you. We therefore beg to express our entire concurrence in his opinion.

“ We are, gentlemen, your obedient servants,

“ J. W. BRAINE,
J. G. FRENCH.

“ To the Governors of the Poor of
St. James's, Westminster.”

SECOND REPORT.

“ Gentlemen,—In your resolution of the 2nd instant, I was requested to inspect the children at Norwood, belonging to this parish, for the purpose of ascertaining the probable

* Nine children, whose names it is not necessary here to specify.

causes of the diseases prevalent among them, and to furnish a written report of the results of my observations.

“ The actual condition of health and disease which I found to prevail amongst the St. James’s children placed at Norwood, I have already stated in the report which I had the honor of laying before you on the 3rd of March.

“ In endeavouring to assign the causes which produced this sickly condition of the children, I am fully aware of the difficulty of the task, and am ready to acknowledge that an opinion formed upon this subject with the greatest caution may nevertheless be erroneous.

“ Although some of the children were reported to be ill in the month of September, yet I am inclined to believe that the exposed situation of Norwood, the severity of the weather during the winter, and the consequent crowding together of the children for longer periods than usual, and the deficiency of proper exercise in the open air, necessarily resulting from these unfavorable circumstances, have mainly contributed to impair the health of the children.

“ The want of a regular Medical Superintendent of the Institution, and of a sufficient number of experienced nurses, has doubtless also contributed much to extend and aggravate disease among the children.

“ The disordered state of the digestive organs observed in many of them might lead to the supposition, that there was something defective in the quantity or quality of their food ; but the Dietary stated by Mr. Aubin, to be in use at his Institution, is essentially the same as that in use at other extensive establishments which I have recently visited, and where I found the children in a state of good health.

“ I have the honor to remain, gentlemen,

“ Your faithful and obedient servant,

“ ROBERT LEE, M.D.

“ To the Governors of the Poor, St. James, Westminster.”

And now for the “full and impartial statement” to which the authorities have pledged themselves, but which has not hitherto made its appearance. Is it intended to appear at all? I believe not. The extracts I have already given from the reports of the Governors, will at once show that the Governors have been seriously wanting in their duty; and I am to be told, forsooth, that it is not now necessary to make a statement, since the verdict of the late inquest is to be considered as exculpatory of their conduct. The verdict given is special, and as follows:—

“That the death of the deceased, George Coster, was caused by a mesenteric disease, of a severe nature, produced by a scrofulous habit of body. That this jury present that no blame whatever attaches to Mr. Aubin, the person at whose establishment the pauper children of this parish have been put to nurse, on whose part it has been proved that every attention to the children under his care has been manifested by him towards them. That, in the opinion of this Jury, the Governors of the Poor, in choosing Mr. Aubin’s establishment, have been actuated by the best and purest motives, and have been fully justified by the evidence adduced before this Jury.”

It is now necessary to consider the character of this inquest and the circumstances under which it was got up. Who called the inquest? The Parochial Boards. Was it not called as the most ready way of being relieved from the necessity of redeeming the pledge which had been made to the public of a “full and impartial statement.”? Did not the Board meet upon the subject? Did they not depute five of their members to draw up this statement? Did not these members call in the assistance of the Rector of the

Parish, the Rev. Mr. Ward, to help them in their labours? And, did they not upon a review of the minutes, extracts from which I have now given, feel that it was impossible to make a statement that would be at all likely to satisfy any one? How ingenious was the suggestion that an inquest on the poor boy George Coster, then lying dead at the work-house would terminate the inquiry! How easy to avail themselves of legal technicalities and legal bullying to limit and crush, or, to employ a term unfortunately in its nature and acceptation but too closely applicable to this matter, *burke* the inquiry! I blush to think of such a mode of evading the inquiry. The true and only legitimate object of such an investigation must be into the whole case—to the fact that a *great number* of children had died, of the *same* disease, placed under the *same* circumstances, and that this disease was of such a nature that it might fairly be inferred to be the result of *improper treatment*. These children have died of Mesenteric Disease. It is a disease with which children (but especially those of the poor) are frequently affected. In families with scrophulous disposition it is common. But, are all the children of the Parish of St. James, scrophulous? They are the offspring of different parents—there is surely no hereditary transmission operating on *all* of these children. There is nothing infectious or contagious in the disorder. It remains to be seen whether this disease cannot be produced, originally produced, by improper treatment? I believe that it can. I have no doubt upon the subject. I could quote abundance of authorities upon this head. But if there should by chance be a different opinion as to this point, there is surely none

among medical men, as to the disorder being always aggravated by improper food.

Now, it is clear, from the reports of the Board of Guardians of the Poor, and the reports of the several Professional men, who have been sent by the parochial authorities to visit the establishment at Norwood, that there were very great defects as to cleanliness, experienced nursing, and medical treatment. I feel it but due to Mr. Aubin, the proprietor of this establishment, to say, that from all the evidence that has been given, there does not appear to have been any disinclination on his part to attend to the suggestions of all who visited these children. But the system is bad and ought not to be allowed; it is impossible that so many children congregated together under such circumstances can be healthy. Neither ought there to be any incentive to traffic in humanity—no temptation should be placed in the way of individuals to make money or derive a profit upon such an object as the support of the poor. The Government, and the Government alone, if such a system is at all to be pursued, ought to have the controul and management of such establishments; and with officers regularly salaried and of course placed under proper responsibility. This case does not merely apply to the children of St. James's Parish, but to others. I have seen one dreadful case from a neighbouring Parish, of a child brought away from Norwood, the details of which are shocking. I have given a place of refuge to this poor boy in the Charing Cross Hospital, and placed him under the care of an enlightened and humane Physician. I have had other children from Norwood brought to

me*—they are all of the *same* description—it is the *same* disease, and doubtless occasioned by the *same* treatment.† It is a system which loudly calls for correction—nay EXTINCTION. The children of St. James' went on well when at Wimbledon. Why remove them? There they were to be seen sporting about in all the buoyancy of youth—in the enjoyment of full health—robust limbs—ruddy cheeks, and smiling countenances. Happy innocents! Good God! what a contrast to the picture it has been my lot to draw—a picture, the like of which will I trust never be again seen in this country. But, I have permitted my feelings to carry me away from a more particular consideration of the inquest with which I set out.

I have said this inquest was got up by the Parochial Boards. The foreman of the inquest was Mr. George Lawford, a parishioner who has distinguished himself by his support of the majority of the Board of Governors, and to which Board I find he has since the inquest been elected, together with two others of the jurymen on that occasion, and in the room of three individuals who were opposed to the proceedings I have noticed. Mr. Lawford was objected to by

* A child from Norwood has also recently died in St. George's Hospital. Dr. Wilson tells me, that the appearances upon dissection were similar to those in Coster. He never before saw such an entire absence of fatty matter.

† It was proved at the Inquest, by the evidence of Dr. Robert Lee, that at the time he examined the children belonging to the Parish of St. James, he also inspected the other children (some hundreds) in the establishment, and he inserted a passage in his report to this effect; but upon the representation of the Rector and Mr. A'Beckett, he was induced to expunge it, inasmuch as he was told that it might subject him to an action for libel, as it related to the children of other parishes. I did not press Dr. Lee to state the precise words he had employed, because I should be sorry to expose him or any other person to LEGAL PERSECUTION for telling the TRUTH; but he admitted that it was a passage of a most unfavourable nature as regards the health of the children generally.

Mr. Daniel, a Barrister of great respectability, who attended the inquest on the part of Mr. Gibbs, the churchwarden, to watch the inquiry. He was objected to on the ground of his having publicly expressed an opinion on the subject upon which the jury was called to deliberate.* But the objection was overruled, as according to Mr. Adolphus, it not having been made before Mr. Lawford was sworn, he was compelled to serve and no one could displace him. So it proceeded, and Mr. Lawford was the foreman.

“ Ab uno disce omnes.”

It is not in my power to describe this *Court of Justice*, or to enumerate a hundredth part of the difficulties I had to encounter in the delivery of my evidence, or in endeavouring to arrive at the truth from others. A determined perseverance, however, and the consciousness of doing my duty enabled me (though necessarily in an imperfect manner) amidst hootings and hisses, clapping of hands, scraping of feet, all sorts of indecorous expressions; and added to this, insult and impertinence from the hired lawyer (Mr. Adolphus) on the occasion, to get sufficient of the case before the jury to satisfy the public of the discrepancy of the evidence and the verdict with which the affair terminated. It was in vain that I protested against haste and precipitancy—that the

* I would ask whether Mr. Lawford did not accompany certain Members of the Board of Governors to the Poor Law Commissioners, and there meet the Hon. Frederick Byng, an active Member also of the Board, and since elected Churchwarden, who is said to have held frequent communications with the Commissioners; and whether at the interview, the object of which was to prevent the Commissioners from coming into the parish of St. James, and taking the care of the Poor under their Board, it was not stated that the determination of the Commissioners must necessarily depend in a great measure upon the result of the inquiry then pending?

dissection of the body should be done with great care and precision—No—it was determined to be proceeded with, and witnesses were to be examined just according to the order chosen by the Parochial Board and their friends, Vestrymen, Rate-payers, and every body else ; for, at this inquest, any body was allowed to speak who had voice sufficient to make himself heard, and the whole inquiry which, to have had anything like justice done to it, would, as the report of a morning paper (the Herald) justly observed, have occupied as many days as it had hours, “ if all the circumstances attending the removal of the children, the visitations, the reports, &c. had been gone into, and the evidence taken down at length by the Coroner, which was not done, he deeming it unnecessary, as the cause of death by mesenteric disease was so clearly proved.” The inquest lasted from four o’clock of the afternoon of Saturday the 19th March, until two o’clock of the *Sunday* morning. At the commencement of the Inquest I gave in a list of the names of several persons whom I deemed it would be necessary to examine on the occasion, none of whom were of course present. I therefore embrace this method of laying the matter before the public, and I now call upon your Lordship to do your duty as I have done mine. Let me, however, in conclusion, tell your Lordship that your conduct towards me,—your wanton and unjustifiable conduct, in endeavouring to impugn my veracity,—will not weigh with a discerning and reflecting public. But it may probably have a tendency to check those who possess less moral courage than I fortunately do, to step forward to expose abuses, which it is your duty to attend to, and to correct. Rare, indeed, is the individual,

particularly among professional men, who will venture to run the risk of having his veracity questioned by a Secretary of State—in the House of Commons too, before the whole country—where he is not present to reply to the assertions that may be made, and to such assertions as those which your Lordship has applied to my letter, and which I think I may without any assumption fairly say were not entitled to be made. I have lived long enough and been long enough in my profession to be well known. I have filled many responsible stations, and am at this moment a Teacher of Anatomy and Physiology and Surgery, and the Senior Surgeon of a Public Hospital and of the Asylum for Female Orphans. Assured, as your Lordship was, of the disinterested nature of my application, it was surely entitled to have met with a different reception. I have ever held, and I should have thought that your Lordship would, from the known principles of the family of which you are a descendant, have also held the opinion that—

“SALUS POPULI SUPREMA LEX,”

and that you would have acted in accordance with that axiom, and have been anxious at least to have shewn courtesy to one who enabled you so fully to manifest the sincerity of your professions, and your desire to establish a good government in all situations placed under your control and authority, and so seriously entrusted to your care.

The evil I have pointed out is one of considerable magnitude—it is shocking to HUMANITY—detrimental to the interests of SOCIETY—and injurious to the STATE. All the best feelings of our nature call aloud for attention to the condition and treatment of these

poor children. If such a system is to be perpetuated, then indeed farewell to vigour and health—farewell to industry. The strength of a country depends upon the vigour of its population. Political economists will not dispute the truth of this observation, and in recommending this subject to the serious consideration of the Legislature, I take my leave of your Lordship.

I have the honor to be,

Your Lordship's most obedient servant,

T. J. PETTIGREW.

Saville Row,
April 19, 1836.

POSTSCRIPT.

POSTSCRIPT.

IN the foregoing letter I have considered the subject in a medical and in a moral point of view, and I trust that I have shown sufficient ground for an appeal to the Legislature to protect the Pauper Parish Children. My attention, however, having been directed, in the consideration of this subject, to the several Acts of Parliament relating to the Management of the Poor, I must notice a statute, which, as far as I can ascertain, is unrepealed, and which was passed as far back as the 7th year of the reign of Geo. III. cap. 39, A.D. 1767. It seems specially to have provided against the evil of which I have thus complained, and which will lead me to consider the conduct of the Parochial Board of St. James as decidedly **ILLEGAL**.

The statute to which I refer is entitled “An Act for the better Regulation of the Parish Poor Children of the several parishes therein mentioned, within the Bills of Mortality.” Its preamble runs thus: “Whereas it would greatly tend to the preservation of the lives of the Infant Parish Poor of the several parishes hereafter mentioned, and be of public utility, if the officers of such parishes were compelled by law to send such Infant Poor into the country to be nursed, for a certain time; and proper persons ap-

pointed guardians in each parish, to inspect into the management and usage of such Infants : and whereas the keeping registers of such Infant Poor, until they shall respectively arrive at the age of fourteen years, be placed out apprentice, or otherwise disposed of, would be a further means of preserving the lives of such Infants," &c. &c. And the provisions of this Act are, " that all and every child and children who, on or before the first day of July, 1767, was or were born in, or received into, any workhouse or parish house, or which shall thereafter be born in any workhouse or parish house, or received by any select vestries, governors, directors, or managers, appointed for the management of parochial affairs belonging to the 17 parishes without the walls of London ; the 23 parishes of Middlesex and Surrey, being within the Bills of Mortality and the Liberty of the Tower of London ; and the 10 parishes within the City and Liberty of Westminster, shall be nursed and taken care of in the following manner :"—Such of them as are under six years of age, to be sent into the country not less than three miles off ; those under two years, not suckled by the mother, not less than five miles off ; and those above two and under six years of age, not less than three miles off. Weekly rates to be paid for their nursing and maintaining till apprenticed or returned to the workhouse, not less than 2s. 6d. for the first six years, and not less than 2s. after that age. And " over and above the said charge for nursing and maintaining each child, pay to every nurse who shall have received any child of or under the age of nine months, (the said child being alive, and having been treated properly, and

to the satisfaction of the Guardians hereafter mentioned, or the major part of them, assembled at any meeting appointed by this Act,) after having been under her care twelve months, a sum not less than 10s. as a reward for her pains and care taken in the nursing of such child. And the Governors, Directors, Managers, or Overseers of the Poor, of the respective parishes from whence such children shall be sent to nurse, shall find good, proper and sufficient clothing for each and every of them respectively; and shall defray the expenses of conveyance, medicines, burials, and all other necessary expenses incurred on account of the said children; and shall keep, in a book or books to be provided for that purpose, separate, regular and exact accounts of all expenses incurred in relation thereto.”

This Act also points out the manner in which any evils that may attend this system of management are to be complained of and remedied. It is enacted that the Guardians, or any one of them, have free admittance to visit and see the children, and inform themselves as to the condition of the children, having access to all registers, books and accounts relating to them. “And in case of any neglect or improper conduct, whereby the life or health of a child may appear to the said Guardians, or to any one of them, to be in danger, to report the same to the Select Vestry, Governors, Directors, or Managers, Churchwardens or Overseers of the Poor: and, if the said Vestry, Governors, Directors or Managers, Churchwardens or Overseers, or some or one of them, do not take the most efficacious measures to remedy the evil complained of, that then it shall be lawful to

and for the said Guardians, or any one of them, to inform one or more of His Majesty's Justices of the Peace, and give evidence of the facts ; and the said Justice or Justices of the Peace is and are hereby empowered to give such orders and directions therein, as he or they shall think most proper."

It is evident from this statement of some of the provisions of this Act that the Legislature has shewn great solicitude for the preservation of the pauper infants. The *nursing* as distinguished from every other mode of treatment is what the statute particularly insists on, and that there may be no mistake as to what is meant, it will be perceived, that after stating the weekly rates to be paid for *nursing*, the Act grants the giving of rewards to such nurses as shall have performed their duties with proper care and attention, and it must be particularly remarked, that the Governors and Directors of the Poor, and *not the nurses*, are expressly bound to provide the proper clothing, medicines, &c. on account of the children, and keep *separate* accounts of such expenses. Now it appears that the children of St. James' have been placed out at 4s. 3d. per week, and that this sum was intended to include the expenses for clothing, medicines, burials, &c. &c. contrary to the Act of Parliament.

Nothing can be more explicit than this statute to guard against the infant poor being consigned *en masse* to the risk of any general regulations or discipline whatever ; providing that each individual child should have the particular care of a *female nurse* to be stimulated not only by payment for its care and maintenance, but by a special further reward for her

pains and care taken in the nursing of it. Had the utmost ingenuity been exercised to protect helpless infancy from the horrors of a farming system, it seems hardly possible to devise better methods than this statute affords, and, as if prophetically viewing the very case that has occurred, the Act in one part makes use of these words : “ *And in order the more effectually to guard against all dangerous consequences that may arise to the said children from false parsimony, negligence, inadvertency, or the annual change of Parish Officers,*” then, that such further precautions shall be taken as the Act points out.

It appears then, that in conformity with this Act of Parliament, the parish poor children of St. James’ had since the year 1767, or soon afterwards, been provided with the care and protection of country nurses, and for many years, as I have already said they were fixed at Wimbledon, than which a more healthy spot could not possibly be found in the neighbourhood of London. On the individual care of each child depended in a great measure the nurse’s subsistence—every motive for attention in short was brought into action on their parts, and the law being observed, the helpless objects of its protection were duly and properly preserved and brought up in health and activity. None of the dangerous consequences that the Act had contemplated as possible to arise *from false parsimony, negligence, or inadvertency* appears to have taken place in St. James’s Parish. It is not my intention to follow up the legal argument that might be drawn from the preceding statement. I have no wish to attribute corrupt motives to the members of the Parochial Board ; but I cannot but

express my deep regret that there should appear to have been such a determined hostility to all the measures which had the sanction of their predecessors in office, and such a determined spirit to abolish all that had been long established and which had certainly been attended with very beneficial consequences. There are abundant legitimate objects of abuse to remedy in all parish affairs, and it is much to be lamented, that the economical views of the Parochial Governors had not been directed against those, rather than the mode by which the infant pauper children have been maintained.

I will not close this subject without adverting to some testimonials that have been put forth in favour of Mr. Aubin's establishment, although I have no wish to refer to other Parishes or to any circumstances connected with that establishment, separate from its relation to the pauper children of St. James's Parish. The testimonials to which I refer appeared in the Morning Chronicle since the foregoing pages were written. I should pass them by unnoticed did they not contain allusions to the charges I have made and state them to be "false and scandalous" "utterly unfounded" &c. The charges I put forth are, I am certain, substantiated and sustained in the fullest manner in this letter; and had the Clergyman, the Overseers, and others possessed any thing like competent ability to examine into the state of health of the children, the mode in which they should be dieted, according to the tenderness of their years, or the condition of their frame; to have formed an accurate judgment of the temperature in which it is necessary they should be placed, the kind of clothing

essential to the maintenance of their health, &c. &c. they would not have subscribed to testimonials which differ so widely from the reports of Dr. Lee, Dr. Copland, Dr. Sigmond, and other most competent authorities, and I believe, I may add, the learned Physician (Dr. Arnott) sent to view the establishment by the Board of Poor Law Commissioners.

