

PART II.

PRESENT-DAY PROBLEMS AND
CHURCH ATTITUDES.

CHAPTER VIII.

PRESENT-DAY PROBLEMS: POPULATION AND PAUPERISM.

IN the previous part of this volume, the action of the Church on social life has been regarded from three points. First, from that of its vocation, as interpreted by the Founder of Christianity in His teaching and in His sacrifice, and as reflected in the consciousness of those who take His yoke upon them and learn of Him.¹ Second, from that of its history, in its period of struggle with the power of the Roman Empire, and with the ancient heathenisms which the Empire protected, in its period of triumph when the kingdoms of the once hostile world became "the kingdom of the Lord and of His Christ," and in the ages during which it gradually established a common type of manners and morals in Europe, and determined the higher elements of European civilisation.²

¹ Chapters II. and III.

² Chapters IV. and V.

Finally, from that of its relation to national developments, and the influence which, through its characteristic institutions and ordinances, it exercised on national temperament and wellbeing. In this last regard, our special survey was limited to Scotland and its National Church.¹

Now, we change our venue. The beginning of a new century reminds us of forces that are no longer guided or controlled by the Church, some of which, indeed, either ignore it or express antagonism, more or less overt, to it; of facts and phenomena that challenge attention and raise the question, How, having regard to them and the life-conditions which they connote, is society to be elevated, and are the kingdom of God and His righteousness to be realised? "There is no social problem," it has been said; "there are social problems." These problems—the subject-matter of the pages that follow—are many and serious.

A connecting-link between the portion of our study on which we enter and that which precedes may be found in the reference, made in the last chapter, to the rapid increase of the population in Great Britain, as constituting one of the difficulties in the way of an efficient discharge of the respon-

¹ Chapters VI. and VII.

sibilities of the National Churches. The prospect suggested by this increase is, to many minds, alarming. From time to time, calculations are presented which, assuming that the ratio of the increase will be in the future what it has been in the last fifty years, set before us such developments as the following—That two centuries and a half hence, Europe alone will contain a population equal to that of the entire globe to-day;¹ that a century hence, London will contain not far from forty millions of souls;² that other large cities, all the world over, will be proportionally multiplied—and so forth. Now, whilst we set such forecasts aside as merely ingenious speculations, we cannot but feel that increasing densities of population create issues, or must precipitate issues, which no wise man will overlook. Malthus has argued that the tendency is to a multiplication of human beings beyond the means of subsistence; and, in connexion with his argument, we are frequently reminded that the earth's stock of life-supporting substances is limited, and that some of these are diminishing. Moreover, it is urged that certain influences essential to vigorous vitality—*e.g.*, pure fresh air and wholesome surroundings—must be impaired by a prodigious augmentation

¹ North American Review, November 1892.

² Modern Cities. By S. L. Loomis.

of people to be fed, clothed, and maintained, involving, as this must involve, a prodigious augmentation of industries of all kinds, with all their inevitable concomitants, the effect of which will be to exhaust and foul the atmosphere, and make the land one vast noisy city, under a coverlet of smoke.

There is no call to give too much heed to this kind of prophesying. When the diminution of the earth's resources is emphasised, it may be replied that, probably, many of these resources have not yet been tapped, and that, with more labour, and more scientifically organised and applied labour, the capabilities of the soil may be indefinitely expanded.¹ We cannot set any limit to the possibilities of nature and of art, and we may believe that each successive period, developing its special burdens, will develop also the means by which these burdens can be met. New necessities make new ingenuities, new fer-

¹ Prince Krapotkin (in the 'Nineteenth Century') writes: "If the population in this country came to be doubled, all that would be required for producing the food for 70,000,000 inhabitants would be to cultivate the soil as it is cultivated in the best farms of this country, in Lombardy, and in Flanders, and to cultivate the meadows which at present lie almost unproductive around the big cities, in the same way as the neighbourhoods of Paris are cultivated by the Paris *maraichers*. All these are not fancy dreams, but mere realities." There are, besides, the vast spaces of the earth whose potentialities are as yet unknown.

ilities of brain and hand, new instruments and methods of production. Our faith in God may whisper to us that, if He is in the heaven, all shall be well with His world.

But one thing is incumbent on us. In its own interest, and with a view to social health and happiness, society is bound to do what a wise providence of mind directs, towards the securing of a physically, intellectually, and morally fit citizenship. Some words of Professor Huxley, bearing on this, are remarkable for the passion which he has infused into them. "So long," he writes, "as unlimited multiplication goes on, no social organisation which has ever been devised, or is likely to be devised, no fiddle-faddling with the distribution of wealth, will deliver society from the tendency to be destroyed by the reproduction within itself, in its intensest forms, of that struggle for existence, the limitation of which is the object of society. However shocking to the moral sense the eternal competition of man against man, or of nation against nation, may be, and however revolting may be the accumulation of misery at the negative pole of society, with that of wealth at the positive pole, this state of things must abide and grow continually worse, so long as Istar holds her sway unchecked. It is the true riddle of the Sphinx, and every nation which does not

solve it will, sooner or later, be destroyed by the monster which itself has generated."¹

A grave feature in this "riddle of the Sphinx" is that the multiplication alluded to is most striking in the classes which are least able to bear it. In England, the growth in these classes is at the rate of one thousand for each day in the year. The two checks that Malthusianism would impose on this growth are, the preventive and the punitive. Under the former of these heads, there are hints, if not proposals, from which a healthy Christian instinct revolts. But the preventions to be desiderated are, obedience to the behests of prudence, and the strengthening of the nobler elements in human nature as against the baser. To glance at only one point. When all circumstances are favourable, early marriages are, speaking generally, better than marriages in later life. But those which are entered into when lads are scarcely out of their teens, and not out of their apprenticeships, and when girls are not much more than in their teens, are far from being a blessing. Almost certainly, the consequences of such unions are, homes whose scanty furnishing has involved their occupants in debt which henceforth clings to them, like a millstone around the neck, making tempers sour and conduct reckless;

¹ Nineteenth Century, February 1888.

and—what is more serious still—an offspring puny, sickly, and pithless. One of the conditions of citizenship which Ruskin lays down is, that children be well-born, and by this phrase he means that which is wanting in the case referred to.¹ Taking a wider view, children are not well-born when, as with multitudes, there is no sense of responsibility as to fatherhood and motherhood, and as to the lives that are brought into the world, and when mere animal appetite dominates over the rational, reflective self. Then, the operation of punitive checks is only too certain; and the operation brings not only misery to individuals, but a hurt and loss to society. No drastic measure, relating to population, can be conceived of that would not drag behind it a train of evils; but all who seek the real good of the people are bound to do their utmost to raise the ideals of parentage, to deliver their world from the harm of ill-born children, and, as the only efficient check on lust, so to strengthen the intellectual and moral nature that what is grossly sensual shall be subordinated to “nobler loves and higher cares.” On this subject, more cannot be said; but less it is impossible to say, when we consider the problem of population, and the conditions of vigorous social life.

¹ He includes more: see ‘Time and Tide,’ p. 123.

When we analyse the constituents of population, we are at once arrested by the distinctness of the opposition between the two poles of our civilisation.

The aggregate wealth of Great Britain is enormous, and its growth in recent years has been by leaps and bounds. In the United States of America, the annual percentage of increase is more remarkable. There, for some time, this percentage has been nearly three times in excess of the increase of population. In his last message to Congress, President McKinley referred to the wonderful record of commercial and industrial progress during 1900. He noted that, "for the first time in the history of the States, the imports and exports had exceeded two billions of dollars; the increase of exports in that year over the previous amounting to between 167 and 168 millions of dollars, and the increase of imports amounting to nearly 153 millions." But, though the tale to be told concerning the United Kingdom does not exhibit such phenomenal results, it is one represented by notable figures. In 1899, the total value of imports and exports taken together was between 814 and 815 millions sterling, showing an increase over the previous year of 50 millions. The total annual income may be set down as upwards of £1,700,000,000, allowing for each per-

son—man, woman, child—on an average about £40 per annum, and for each male about £170 per annum.¹ Now, no sensible person supposes that an equality of share in the nation's wealth by the nation's citizenship is possible; but, in view of the immense totals of wealth which these statistics indicate, the appalling prevalence of poverty jars on the mind. One who visits the nethermost places in New York and Chicago, and observes, not, perhaps, the sodden and hideous depravity which is evident among the submerged tenths in London, and in the older European cities, but still enough and to spare of black, squalid wretchedness, recalls the two billions of dollars which the imports and exports had exceeded, and asks why this mass of impoverished life should be so vast and solid. Long dark shadows seem always to rest on material progress. Hitherto, it is affirmed, the tendency has been towards the accumulation of riches in the hands of the well-to-do, money making money, and, in the measure of this accumulation, towards rendering the poverty of the poor more abject and hopeless. There is exaggeration, sometimes culpable exaggeration, in many of the statements that are based on this affirmation; for, life-averages and conditions have been greatly improved

¹ Mulhall, Dictionary of Statistics, p. 245.

by the expansions of commerce and industry. It is the contrast of the want and woe of the lower sections of the community with the luxury that is conspicuous on the heights, and the comfort that marks the middle classes and the upper strata even of the working class, that makes the inequality harsh and glaring. But no person can be acquainted with the position of unskilled labourers, especially with that of the earners of precarious livelihoods—those who may be designated the *ins and outs*—without feeling that there is a justification for the belief that, below a certain line, the advance has not been commensurate to that above it. “The new forces,” it has been said, “strike the social fabric at a point intermediate between the top and the bottom. It is as though an immense wedge were being forced, not underneath society, but through society. Those who are above the line of separation are elevated; those who are below are crushed down.”¹

By this enigma of our social life we are confronted. In the midst of the worlds in which we live and move and have our being are the wide, sad zones of pauperism and poverty. To reduce these zones, is one of the most

¹ Poverty and Progress, p. 6.

pressing obligations of a society that calls itself Christian.

Estimates of the pauper element in the population—*i.e.*, of the proportion maintained, in whole or in part, by the rates imposed on the community—vary. On one day in the year 1898, there were in England and Wales, in Scotland, and in Ireland upwards of one million and twenty-five thousand persons in receipt of public relief.¹ Mr Charles Booth reminds us that, inasmuch as the relief given is not generally permanent, the number of persons receiving daily aid must be multiplied by 2.3.² And, thus multiplying, he argues that, taking 1898 as the typical year, the pauper class may be set down as between two and three millions.³ The words “pauper” and “pauperised” are often used in an elastic sense, as including the houseless, inmates of prisons, lunatics, objects of the charity of associations or individuals, as well as the recipients of outdoor and indoor

¹ Reports of Local Government Boards.

² Paper read to Statistical Society, December 1891.

³ Mr Chamberlain is quoted ‘In Darkest England’ as having said: “There is a population equal to that in the Metropolis which has remained constantly in a state of abject destitution and misery. The submerged class, according to Mr Giffen, comprises one in five of manual labourers, six in a hundred of the population. Take three millions as representing the destitute in England.”

relief—truly “a vast despairing multitude in a condition nominally free but really enslaved.” Giving this elasticity of meaning to his statement, Sir Robert Giffen speaks of five millions “whose existence is a stain on our civilisation.”¹ Let us realise what these figures denote. “At least one in five of the manual-labour class, of six in every hundred of the entire population,” belongs to a class dependent and needy! The picture suggested is that of a procession from morning to night of thousands on thousands—the beaten in life’s fight, the fallen, the unfortunate, the abjectly poor, on whose black banner are written the words Destitution and Despair. And this in a country with an annual income of more than £1,700,000,000!

To ensure strict accuracy as to the amount of pauperism, in the legal signification of the term, let us turn to the annual reports of the Local Government Boards. In the report of persons relieved in England and Wales on the 1st of January 1901, it is stated that the total number of paupers, including insane, at that date was 801,547. Taking the population as rather more than 32 millions, this means that one in every 40 persons, 2·5 per cent of the

¹ *Essays in Finance*, vol. ii. p. 350.

people, is in pauperism. In London, the proportion is somewhat higher. This, adopting Mr Booth's calculation, will give about 1,700,000 persons as the pauper element. The report of the Local Government Board of Scotland for 1900 informs us that "the number of poor of all classes, including dependents, in receipt of relief on the 15th May 1899, was 97,947, of whom 84,969 were ordinary poor, and 12,978 were lunatic poor. Of these, upwards of 43 per cent were 65 years of age and upwards, more than 11 per cent were children, and nearly 45 per cent were between the ages of, say, fourteen and sixty-five." Again accepting Mr C. Booth's estimate, this may be held to indicate that about 200,000 persons in Scotland were, in the year referred to, in receipt of larger or smaller sums by way of relief. The hopeful circumstance noted in the reports is that pauperism is decreasing. In England, the proportion of paupers was much smaller in 1901 than in any year between 1861 and 1875. It has fallen from over 40 to 25 to the thousand. In Scotland, compared with 1868, the year presenting the highest record, "the number of poor per thousand of the population has fallen from 41 to 23, a decrease of 18 per thousand of the population." The question, of

course, arises, whether a considerable element of this decrease may not be attributable to additional stringency in the application of tests,—a stringency which, whilst reducing the number aided from the rates, possibly leaves a great multitude on the lower side of the region between poverty and absolute want—on the brink of a Slough of Despond.

The effect on social life of the existing legal system of relief, with workhouses or poorhouses, outdoor aid, armies of inspectors and officials, committees and councils, is a topic too large and many-sided to admit of discussion in these pages. With the objections that are taken to it we are all familiar—such as, its tendency to destroy independence of spirit, and to discourage thrift by making dependence on the parish the accepted prospect of the poor; its fostering of unfilial attitudes on the part of grown-up children to parents; its promotion of habits of mendacity and deception; its shedding of poison into the springs of charity, and narrowing of the channels of benevolence by making the care of the poor “a burden on the rates.” And, in these and other objections, there is a force which those who are best acquainted with the working of the Poor Law will be the most ready to admit. But the Poor Law is a fact; and, in

view of all the circumstances with which we must reckon, some statutory provision is indispensable. Persons cannot be allowed to perish from want. This at least is due from society to its unfortunate members. Criticism of the methods according to which a debt both of citizenship and humanity is discharged is good, if its aim is to indicate better methods, or to remove abuses which have crept into administration. In the meantime, we are bound to do all that can be done to minimise the evils attendant on the machinery of relief, and to make that as efficient as it can be.

The State has, to a great extent, superseded the action of the Church. Could the Church, in view of the magnitude of the problem to be solved, and of its domestic divisions, undertake, by the free-will offerings of its membership, to administer the aid which has been thrown as a charge on the entire citizenship? A well-known and instructive experiment in this direction is associated with the great name of Dr Chalmers. When the population of Glasgow was not a fourth of the population of this day, he organised an agency which, dispensing with the imposition of assessments, endeavoured to prove the sufficiency of the "use and wont" of Scotland, by constituting the Church and its apparatus the centre of all administra-

tion.¹ The town council of the city gave the ardent philanthropist and economist a fair field for the carrying out of his plan. It suspended the operation of the Poor Law in the parish of St John's. The "separate, independent, and exclusive management" of the funds to be raised by collections in the parish church was intrusted to him. He poured the energy of his large heart into the work, and devoted the practical capacity with which he was abundantly endowed to the organisation of his parish, with its 10,000 souls. He mapped out small districts, which deacons, taking the place of inspectors, visited, carefully ex-

¹ Dr Chalmers was translated to St John's in 1819. Sir Henry Craik, in his interesting 'History of a Century,' gives a sketch of the administration of funds for the poor prior to the Poor Law of 1845: "In 1597 this was intrusted to the kirk-session. In 1672 there was a discretionary power given to levy an assessment; but even though the heritors were combined with the kirk-session in raising funds, their distribution rested with the latter. In the last decade of the eighteenth century the ratio of the enrolled poor—even although the imposition of an assessment had been common for fifty years—was still very moderate. In 1791 it was only 18 for each thousand of the population as compared with 48 in England. In the first quarter of the present [the nineteenth] century it increased considerably, but there was still a widespread unwillingness to follow the lax example of England. It was only when discontent and altered social conditions forced the problem on men's attention that the necessity of action one way or another was felt. The necessity became more urgent year by year, and at length in 1840 it forced on an official inquiry, the fruit of which was seen in the Poor Law of 1845."—Vol. ii. p. 322.

aming all cases of poverty, and giving relief as it was ascertained to be deserved. The experiment was a success, so long as the genius and magnetic force of Dr Chalmers directed it, and so long as the after-glow of that genius and force was felt. Before he began his labours, the cost of providing for the poor of the district covered by his parish was about £1400 annually; under his supervision that sum was reduced to £280 annually, and the condition of those who were relieved in the area of his operations was better than that in the assessed districts of Glasgow.

But the success was short-lived. After a ministry of four years in St John's, he who was "the pulse of the machine" removed to St Andrews. For some time, the impetus of the movement he originated was sustained. Ten years after his removal, an English Poor Law Commissioner reported that the system had proved triumphant, that it was then in perfect operation, and that not a doubt was expressed by its managers of its continuing to remain triumphant. The Englishman did not see that the glow was fading. That which he declared to be in perfect operation was, shortly after he had given his testimony, abandoned, and, so far as the relief of the poor was concerned, the parish became part of the ordinary Poor Law

system.¹ The experiment, which thus succeeded and then broke down, has never been repeated. For what it accomplished, a Chalmers was necessary, and even he could not bear the strain of the toil for more than a brief period. And Glasgow and the world have travelled far, and developed new social states, since his day.

When we speak of relief, it must be understood that the legal system is intended to offer only a last resource. This intention is obscured by a change of feeling which shows that a leaven of evil import is at work. To "go on the parish" is too often regarded as a first, rather than a last, resource. In former days, there was a sense of shame attached to it. The necessity to do so broke the heart of honest man or woman. To prevent it, the relatives of the unfortunate were ready to pinch themselves. In the present day, that sense of shame is not so widely prevalent. Those who have sat on committees of boards or councils know how frequently sons, even when earning a fair wage, need to be compelled by law to contribute to the support of aged parents; and clergymen of large city parishes are called frequently to sign applications, for the benefit of the poor roll, by fathers or mothers suing their children for an aliment. "It is not a cause for

¹ Dr Hanna's *Memoirs of Dr Chalmers*, vol. ii. pp. 287-315.

wonder," writes an inspector; "for the parents probably did little for them but bring them into the world, and let them fight their way in it as best they can."¹ Perhaps so, and if so, the more the pity. But even good parents are neglected by their offspring, and the thought running in the mind is, that the parish is bound to look after the poor, and that relatives, who have enough to do to provide for their own families, are released from responsibility. "We pay the rates," it is said; "why should not our folk get the benefit?" And, taking a different view-point, there are persons, not a few, who find the workhouse with its labour easier than the hard toil in the world outside it. Now, it needs to be enforced that the Legislature has undertaken to secure means of subsistence only for those who are bereft of such means. In rigidly restricting the agency of the Poor Law to this—the lower line of poverty—it is acting in justice to a very considerable number of ratepayers, who are only a little way above that line, and, though in many cases there may seem to be hardship, acting also for the best interests of society. To steer a course which shall avoid both the Scylla of harsh treatment and the Charybdis of unwise treatment is no easy matter.

¹ Report of Local Government Board for Scotland, 1900.

Administrative methods, it may be added, must be frequently revised, and sometimes recast. Officialism is slow to move, and, when it does move, is apt to be clumsy and limp in its motion. But, let it be gratefully acknowledged that, within recent years, a considerable advance in the discrimination and the classification of the poor has been effected. The casual are separated from the habitual, those who need sharp discipline and rigid tests from those who have sunk through no moral fault of their own. There are two classes in the ranks of pauperism that specially appeal to compassion. The one is the class represented by the 43½ per cent in Scotland of sixty-five years old and upwards; the other is that represented by the 11½ per cent of children.

With regard to the latter class—children too often ill-born and unwelcomed—shall we not indorse the saying of the late Sir John M'Neill in his evidence before the House of Commons, "I would rather that no child were in any poorhouse"? "The day is not far distant," added Sir John, "when we shall have no children in the poorhouse that can be suitably boarded out." That day, we may believe, is in the immediate future. The erection of cottage homes, unattached to any poorhouse, is a policy which

obtains increasing acceptance; and there are hundreds of children boarded out, in both the Lowlands and the Highlands of Scotland, under regulations favourable to their physical and moral development. Separated from unwholesome environments, they are being trained in the habits of useful and healthy life.

With regard to the former class, there are, undoubtedly, many who, whilst entitled to pity, have no claim on esteem; but many also are recipients of aid, because a place can no longer be found for them in workshop or on farm, and there is none to help them. In the Parliamentary Blue-Book, there is a statement in the report of a superintendent of a Poor Law district which merits attention. It is this: "Several recent changes in legislation and conditions of employment act somewhat as factors tending to increase pauperism. The Employers' Liability Act, while on the one hand relieving the parishes of persons who have actually received injury in employment, if they are fortunate in making good their claim, hinders the engagement of aged persons, or persons with physical and mental disability, such as defective eyesight or hearing, weakness of heart (causing faintness), or dulness of intellect. The increase of joint-stock companies and co-operation and trades-unionism in some respects tend to

increase pauperism; for, where individual firms would formerly retain a servant, although unable to perform a full day's work, the eagerness for dividends, and the necessity of paying standard wages, do not now permit of his employment."¹ Poor old men! The world, it seems, does not want them. The decree of big dividends and standard wages is, "To the poorhouse with the old men." It makes one sad to see the veteran, who has borne the heat and burden of a long day, consigned to the scene of withered leaves and flame-spent cinders.

A question which of late has been eagerly discussed, but to which no adequate reply has yet been given, is, What can be done towards removing the stigma of pauperism from the aged who have lived honourably and honestly, and whose good labour has helped to make the nation's wealth? Some years ago, a scheme of national assurance against sickness and old age was formulated, but the judgment of a Committee of the House of Commons dismissed it as impracticable. Within the last ten years, proposals for "old-age pensions for the people" have been made, not only by doctrinaire philanthropists, but by such politicians and men of affairs as Mr Chamberlain. It cannot be said that these proposals have excited

¹ Report of Local Government Board for Scotland, 1900.

any enthusiasm among the classes whose benefit they contemplate. "We do not want old-age pensions," exclaimed a Labour leader. "Our men die of hardship before old age arrives. What we want is to make their short lives more liveable and comfortable."¹ In this utterance, he interprets a prevalent feeling. Men who live from hand to mouth are apt to take short "dips into the future"; "sufficient," they think, "for the day is the evil [or the good] thereof." What relieves a present pressure, or gives a present advantage, appeals to them with more force than any scheme to meet a contingency at a period which, to younger persons, seems so remote as sixty-five years of age. But, independently of this trend of thought, the carrying out of any plan of pensions involves difficulties in detail, the way through which has not yet been made apparent. One of these difficulties is to prevent the pension from degenerating into a bounty, which in effect would be only another form of outdoor relief. A second difficulty connects with the issue, whether in the bestowment of the bounty there shall be discrimination of the aged poor.² In Ger-

¹ Mr Ben Tillet, quoted in 'A Plea for Liberty,' chap. x.

² In a speech delivered lately Mr Morley said: "The problem is one of supreme difficulty. You have a difficulty in the method of

many, an endowment is secured for selected wage-earners, but the plan there adopted cannot be regarded as completely successful. And any investigation as to means and merit conducted by officials is almost certain to be both irksome and unsatisfactory. The contention of Mr Charles Booth and others, that the contribution to a national pension fund, available for persons of all sorts and conditions at sixty-five, should be universal and compulsory, would seem to be the only system of direct State intervention by which the end desired can be secured. But this does not meet with favour. "It would mean," remarks an essayist, "the substitution of a poll-tax—vexatious, costly, and demoralising—for the Poor Law, the cost of which is met by taxation based on a far more equitable adjustment of demands to the means of the taxpayer."¹

To arrive at some practical and practicable scheme, by which the service of those who have grown grey and old in useful labour shall be sub-

attaining your object—the question of whether this or that phase of the work is desirable or not is in itself very difficult. The means of attaining it without doing more damage than good, by injuring the self-reliant and self-supporting institutions which the labouring classes have splendidly built up for themselves—that constitutes a situation which no man with any sense of responsibility will deal with lightly or off-hand."

¹ A Plea for Liberty, chap. x.

stantially recognised, may not, in a future time, pass the wit of man. In the meantime, might not much be done by employers, by the benevolent, by society in general, towards the encouragement of self-help through co-operative and trades unions, savings banks, and friendly societies? The Friendly societies have wonderfully developed in their operations and in their resources.¹ They are registered, and are under careful supervision. They have enormous funds. Some of them—especially the Oddfellows and the Foresters—have special pension funds, whereby a young man, beginning at twenty years of age, can ensure 5s. a-week at the age of sixty-five for the payment of 4¼d. a-week.² Unfortunately, the facilities thus offered are not taken advantage of so extensively as is to be desired; but no way more educative of self-respect and of a wise forethought could be found than that of offering inducements to the working classes partially to provide, by means of them, for the liabilities of loss of health, or loss of power to serve, when the envious years write their mark on the frame of the workman.

So long as the only mode of relief is that of

¹ Mr Chamberlain has recently advocated a new beginning, with the co-operation of the Friendly societies.

² This rate is taken from the tables of the Foresters' Society.

the Poor Law, the old who, through no fault of their own, are obliged to drop out of the ranks of the army of toilers should be treated with all possible consideration. Homes for such, apart from the ordinary poorhouse, might be provided, if not by law, at least by benevolence.

There is much connected with the administration of statutory relief that cannot be regarded as satisfactory. The blame may be divided between the system, and the unsatisfactory social states to which it is related. But Christian wisdom can do much to elevate even the sunken mass of pauperism; and, though the Church in its corporate capacity no longer directs the machinery, it can complement or supplement the machinery that is operative. A poorhouse, as now ordered, is a melancholy place: vitality feeble, low-toned, much of it vicious; but human souls are there, precious to Him who sees with other and larger eyes than ours. There is room in it for the exercise of sympathy, and for the blessings of Christian ordinances. The writer of these pages has no more pleasant recollection of his service in Glasgow than that which is associated with worship, and the celebration of the Holy Communion, in the Poorhouses of the Barony and the City of Glasgow. And there is an ample opportunity for the

exercise of judicious benevolence in connexion with parochial relief. "The two organisations of relief," it has rightly been said, "should be, indeed, as it were twin-sisters, and should act as completely in union with one another as twin-sisters generally are supposed to do. Without this action, the greatest amount of good cannot be done either by the guardians on the one hand or the clergy, ministers, and other charitable agencies on the other."¹

¹ Handy-Book for Guardians of the Poor, pp. 179, 180.