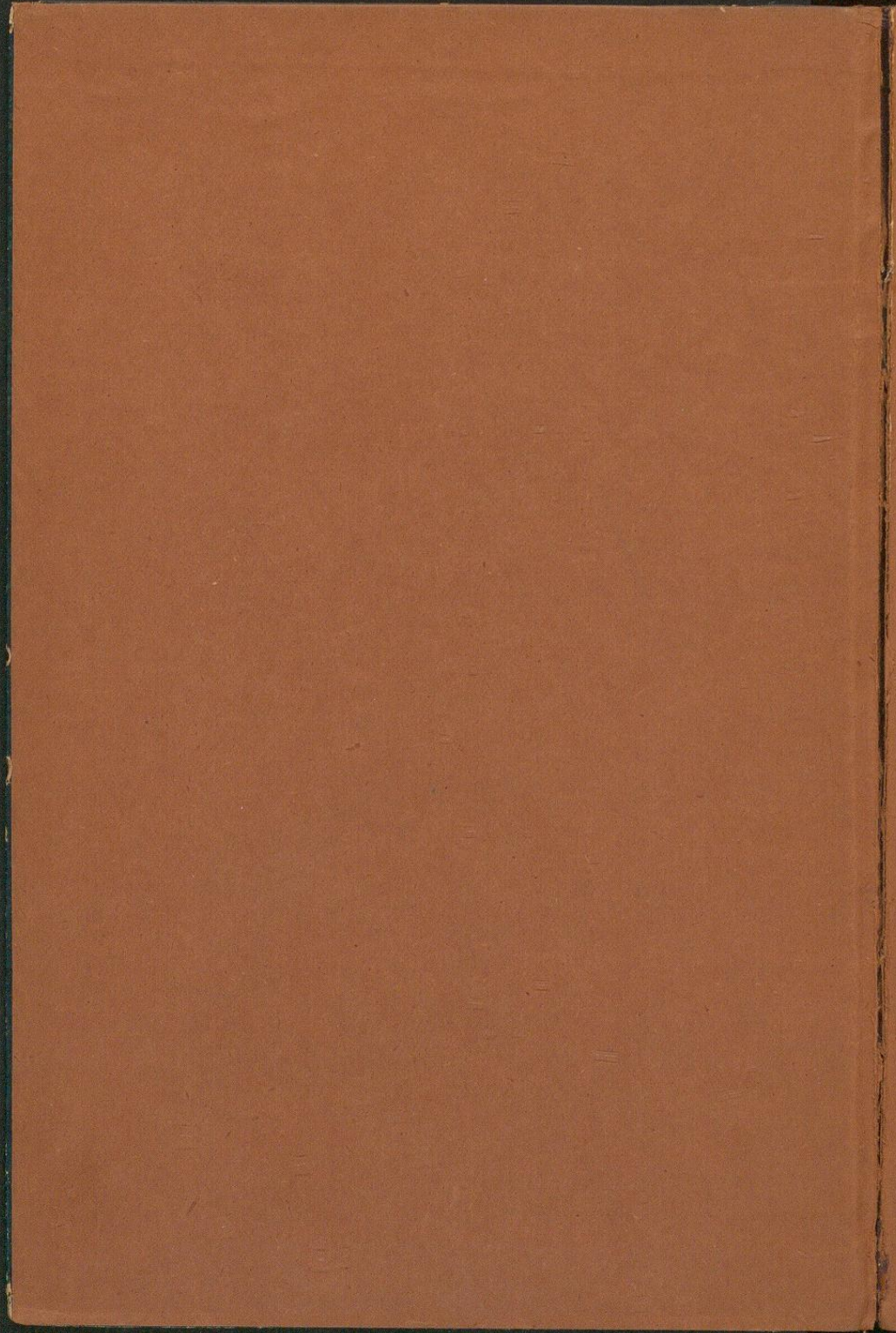
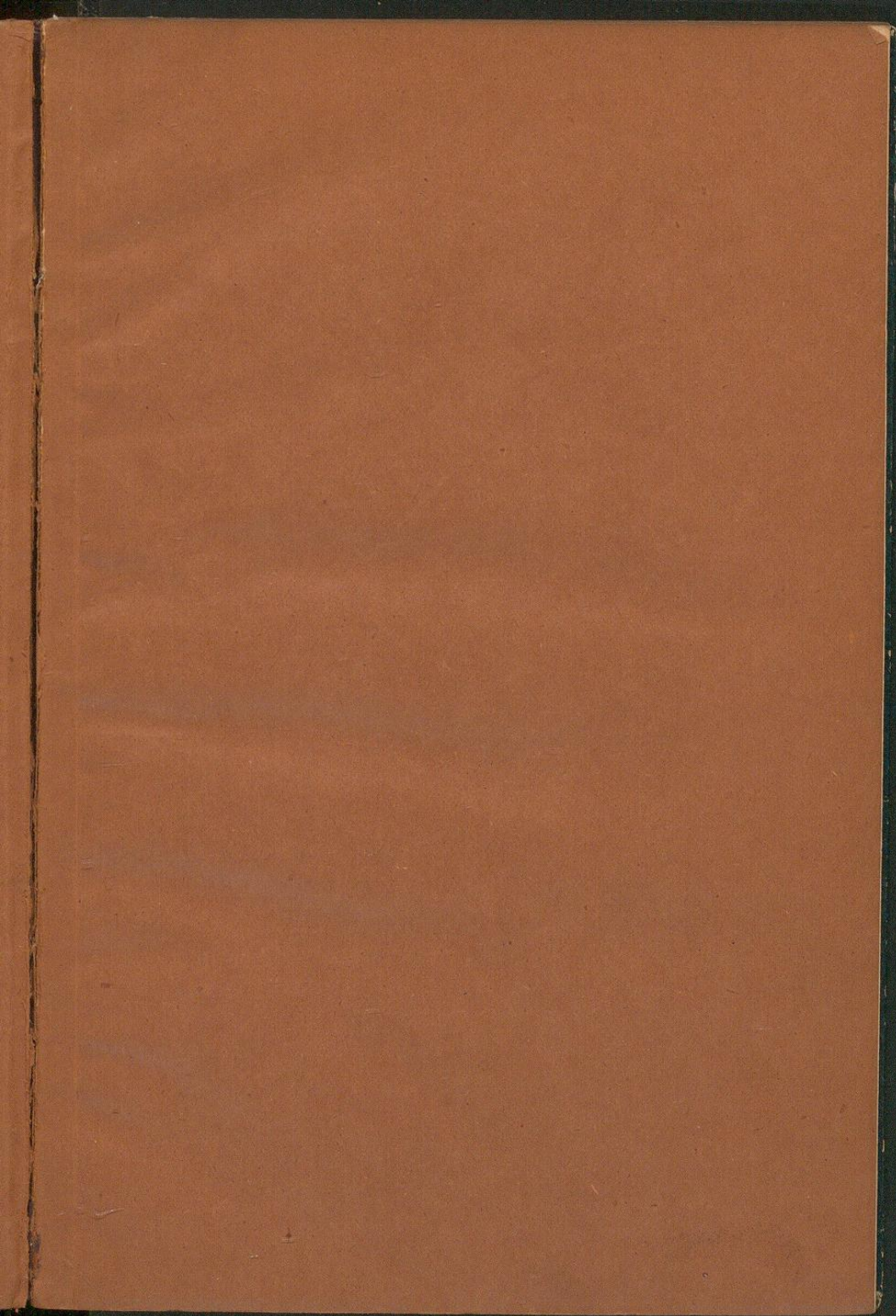


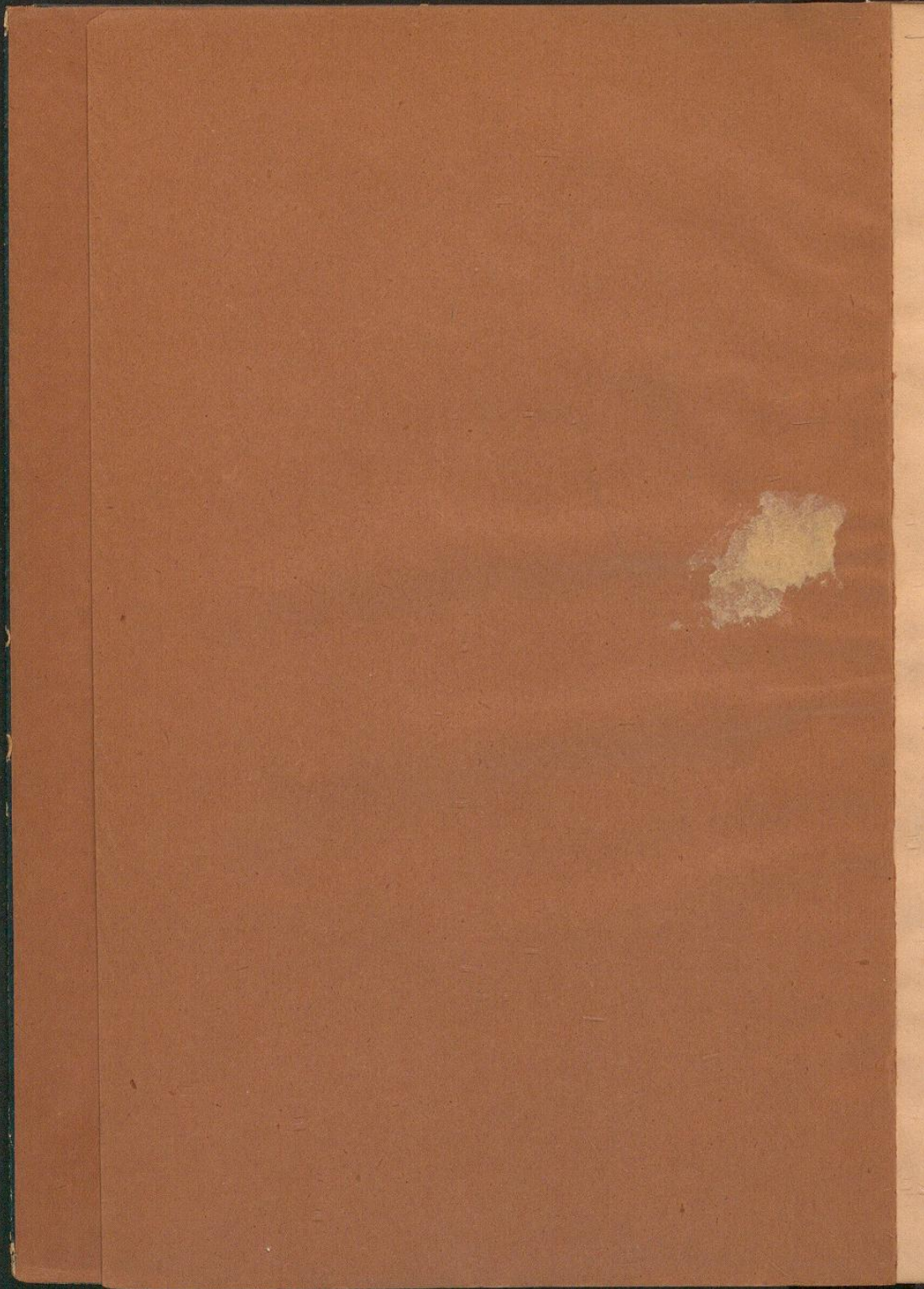
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PUBLIC NURSERIES.



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INTRODUCTION.

THE first idea of this little work was suggested to one of the Authors, a lady, by the perusal of the letters recently published in the *Morning Chronicle* on the condition of the labouring classes. Her first intention was (with the help of some friends) simply to publish a translation of the work of M. Marbeau on Parisian *crèches*, from which some extracts are given in the sequel. But when she and her coadjutors came to work at the translation, they found much, both in the establishments described and in the description of them, which was unsuitable to their purpose. M. Marbeau's style is so florid and superlative that, though it may please the French public, the severer taste of our countrymen would be offended at it. And the *crèches*, though doubtless very excellent in their way, and very suitable to the wants of Paris, (as to which, of course, we do not presume to judge,) are professedly eleemosynary establishments for giving pecuniary assistance and additional luxuries to the poor; whereas our object is, to show those who are in the receipt of good wages how they may, at their own expense, provide some simple machinery for the better care of their children. Moreover, from the state of opinion in England, it seemed necessary that we should take pains to show that there is a want of such establishments, and that, if practicable, they would be beneficial—points which are nowhere touched by M. Marbeau, doubtless because the French public does not require to be convinced of them. So that, though we have throughout felt ourselves under great obligations to M. Marbeau, we have found him gradually retiring more and more into the background, and the purely English part of the work becoming more and more prominent, until, at length, it attained its present shape. This explanation may serve to account for a certain *patchworky*

appearance, which, we fear, is visible throughout, and which indicates the very simple truth—viz., that the writers have had more experience in the composition of quilts than in that of books.

Another point in which we strongly feel our deficiencies is this. It will be observed that it is only for *factory* towns that we think our scheme is suitable, or at least practicable. But in fact we are all Londoners, and have no personal acquaintance with any factory town whatever; so that we have been obliged to take our information as we could get it, without the means of verifying it ourselves. This, we feel, may expose us to the proverbial rebuke addressed to those who meddle in affairs beyond their own province. We think, however, that the sources of our information are such as to ensure its being trustworthy. And if we prove to be in error, and anybody feels disposed to blame us for rashness, the circumstances above stated, with respect to the origin and growth of the work, may perhaps disarm the hostility of such a critic. For he will see that we started with no other design than the very humble one of making known to the English public the doings of our neighbours in France; and were led on step by step to make original suggestions adapted to the state of England. If we now find ourselves out of our depth, it is not because we rashly plunged at once into unknown waters; we waded cautiously in, supported by the corks of M. Marbeau, and were gradually enticed to lay aside our supports, and to advance till our feet could no longer find a bottom.

But whatever faults we may be guilty of, literary or statistical, we have thought it better to send forth our feeble offspring into the world, who will take it for what it is worth. If it falls stillborn from the press, or is found to be worthless, it will at any rate have done little harm beyond the consumption of our time, and (what is a good deal more valuable) that of Mr. Parker. If there is anything of good in it, it will probably be adopted by some person abler than ourselves to bring it to maturity, and thus bring forth its fruit in due season.

PUBLIC NURSERIES.

CHAPTER I.

INFANT MORTALITY, AND ITS CAUSES.

IT is a fact well known to all who have paid the slightest attention to the subject, that the mortality among the children of the poor bears a very large proportion to that among the children of the rich. According to a calculation made, and adduced in evidence before the Commissioners of the Health of Towns, by Mr. Cartwright, the average number of infant deaths, or deaths under five years old, in Preston, among the gentry, was about 17 per cent.; among tradesmen, about 38 per cent.; and among operatives, about 55 per cent.* It is further observed, that the earlier in life this proportion is taken, the more unfavourable it is to infant life. From another table, drawn up by Mr. Clay,† showing the comparative mortality of the different classes in Preston, it is found that of every 100 children born among the gentry, 91 reach their first year; of every 100 children born among tradespeople, 80; whilst among the operatives, only 68 survive so long. To exhibit the same contrast in another point of view, the same gentleman made a careful analysis of the deaths occurring in Preston during a period of six years. The different proportions that deaths under five years of age bear to deaths above that age among the various classes of society is shown in the subjoined table:—

* Health of Towns, First Report, 8vo, p. 165.

† Ibid. p. 184.

Classes.	Number of Deaths		Proportion of Deaths under 5 to those above 5.
	Under 5.	Above 5.	
1st. Gentry. . . .	26	122	1 to 4.7
2nd. Tradespeople .	282	482	1 to 1.7
3rd. Operatives . .	4443	3574	1 to 0.8*

So that, Mr. Clay calculated, if the infant population of the working class could have been reared amid the advantages of food, air, attention, &c., which are afforded to the offspring of the upper class, during the last six years 3034 children would have reached five years of age, who, as it is, have been prematurely swept away by disease. Neither does this statement of the deaths adequately represent the amount of evil awaiting the children of the poor. It is a lamentably well attested fact, which cannot easily be reduced to a tabular statement, that of those who survive infancy many become rickety and deformed, many idiotic, and very many are stunted in their growth, and have their constitutions permanently enfeebled by disease.

Much of this mortality and disease is doubtless to be ascribed to causes which affect the whole body of the poor, adults as well as infants—such as bad air, bad food, want of medical care, and other privations; for these evils, though they operate on all, do so with much more effect on the young and tender than on those whose constitutions have been more matured by age, and who, from their successful struggle through the perils of childhood, are probably the flower of their generation. There is, however, one cause which seems in a peculiar manner to injure the infant poor in factory towns, affecting them exactly in proportion as they are young and helpless, and which appears to be not incapable of amendment. This is the employment of married women away from their own homes, and the consequent neglect and ill treatment of their children by the hired nurses who are employed as substitutes for the mothers.

* Health of Towns, First Report. Svo. p. 174.

That this cause is a very potent one may be concluded from observing that the *infant* mortality in factory towns (in which places a large proportion of young mothers are compelled to work away from their homes) is greater than it is in other towns which show as high a rate of *general* mortality. From the statements made in the *Morning Chronicle* and in other quarters, we were led to examine some of the reports of the registrar-general, in order to see whether they furnished evidence that the employment of the mothers seriously affected the lives of the children. That they do furnish such evidence will be seen by the following tables, which are framed from the reports of 1847-8.

The principles on which they are framed are as follows:— We have made two lists of all the English towns in which the mortality is high—*i. e.*, where more than one person in forty dies annually. The first list is arranged according to the rate of general mortality amongst males, and the second list according to the rate of male infant* mortality, the towns in which women go out to labour being distinguished in each list by italics. It will thus be seen by a glance of the eye that the factory towns are grouped much more towards the head of the second list than of the first—*i. e.*, show a greater amount of infantile as compared with general mortality, than is shown by other towns.†

* By *infant* mortality is here meant the mortality of children under one year of age. The calculations only comprise males; and we have omitted one or two places, such as Portsea, where the returns are affected by the presence of hospitals.

† It will be seen that there are some exceptions to the general rule; for example, Brighton and Ely. Possibly, the Brighton returns may be affected by the circumstance of many sickly infants being taken there to seek health, but to find a grave. We are so utterly ignorant of the city of Ely as to be unable to suggest any cause for the phenomena relating to it. Liverpool is only an apparent exception, for its rate of *infant* mortality, though high when simply compared with that of other towns, yet sinks very much when taken in conjunction with its relative rate of *general* mortality, which is far above that of any other town. After all exceptions, the broad results of the comparison are very striking.

TABLE I.

NAME OF TOWN.	TOTAL DEATHS.	NAME OF TOWN.	TOTAL DEATHS.
Liverpool	1 in 27	Merthyr Tydvil	1 in 37
Manchester	1 in 29	Preston	„
Bristol	1 in 31	Chorlton, Worsley	„
Salford	1 in 32	Coventry	„
Hull	1 in 33	Norwich	„
Shrewsbury	1 in 34	Stoke-on-Trent, Wolstanton	„
Sheffield	„	Macclesfield	„
Leicester	„	Rochdale	„
Nottingham	„	Bury	„
Newcastle-on-Tyne	1 in 35	Stockport	„
Bolton	„	Cambridge	1 in 38
Ashton	„	West Derby (Lancashire)	„
Bath	1 in 36	Salisbury	„
Exeter	„	Reading	„
London	„	Derby	„
Leeds, Hunslet	„	Blackburn	„
Worcester	„	Warrington	„
Colchester	„	Gateshead	1 in 39
Wigan	„	Brighton	„
Birmingham	„	Ely	„
Plymouth	1 in 37	Radford (part of Notting-	
Gloucester	„	ham)	„
Sunderland	„	Bradford	„

TABLE II.

NAME OF TOWN.	INFANT DEATHS.	NAME OF TOWN.	INFANT DEATHS.
Ashton	34 per cent.	Stoke-on-Trent, Wol-	
Nottingham	33 „	stanton	28 per cent.
Manchester	32 „	Norwich	28 „
Bolton	31 „	Coventry	28 „
Leicester	30 „	Bradford	27 „
Salford	30 „	Cambridge	27 „
Liverpool	30 „	Sheffield	27 „
Radford (part of Not-		Chorlton, Worsley	26 „
tingham)	30 „	Preston	26 „
Ely	30 „	Gateshead	26 „
Stockport	29 „	Derby	26 „
Bury	29 „	Birmingham	26 „
Brighton	29 „	Blackburn	25 „
Hull	29 „	Wigan	25 „
Rochdale	28 „	Bristol	25 „
Macclesfield	28 „	Sunderland	25 „

NAME OF TOWN.	INFANT DEATHS.	NAME OF TOWN.	INFANT DEATHS.
Merthyr Tydvil.	24 per cent.	London	23 per cent.
Gloucester	24 „	Exeter	23 „
Colchester	24 „	West Derby, Lan-	
Worcester	24 „	cashire	21 „
Leeds, Hunslet	24 „	Plymouth	21 „
Newcastle-on-Tyne	24 „	Bath	21 „
Warrington	23 „	Shrewsbury	21 „
Salisbury	23 „	Reading	21 „

In addition to the above tables, we may also cite, as an authority, the opinion of the gentleman who investigated the state of the manufacturing districts for the *Morning Chronicle*.*

A vast proportion of the mortality in Manchester is that of children, but of children, be it observed, under the age to labour in the mills. Out of every hundred deaths in Manchester, more than forty-eight take place under five years of age, and more than 51 under ten years of age. In some of the neighbouring towns, particularly Ashton-under-Lyne, the proportion is still more appalling. There, by a calculation made, embracing the five years ending June 30, 1848, it appeared that out of the whole number of deaths, fifty-seven per cent. were those of children under five years of age. It is of course generally known that the first five years of life are most fatal in all districts, but upon comparing a series of cotton-spinning towns in the North, with a series of purely rural districts in the South and West, it appears that while the infant mortality in the former is about fifty-five per cent., speaking in round numbers, that in the latter is only about thirty-three per cent.†

And this very great mortality he ascribes, in a great measure, to the employment of young mothers away from their homes.

Evidence to the same effect is given by Mr. Clay, though not with any view of establishing this point. After stating the great amount of deaths that take place at a very early age, he gives the result of a careful investigation into the state of some families at Preston. It was found that out of about 800 families of married men employed in the mills, the children living in each family were on an average 2.7, and

* We may here state that the following extracts from the *Morning Chronicle* have been made with the full permission of its able editor, for whose kindness and courtesy we beg to return our very best thanks.

† *Morning Chronicle*, Dec. 28, 1849.

those removed by death 1.6; and of those children, 76 out of every 100 had died under five years old. This rate of mortality may appear to some sufficiently high, but Mr. Clay goes on to state what is undeniably true, that it is low compared to the rate among children of the same age elsewhere; and this fact he attributes to the circumstance of most of these families having the benefit of a mother's superintendence, for out of the whole number of 800 only 133 mothers appeared to be working.* To the same effect is a statement made by Lord Ashley before the House of Commons, in the debate which took place this year on the Ten-hours Bill, which is extracted from the report in the *Morning Chronicle*, March 15, 1850:—

He had before him a statement which he had received from the clerk of one of the burial societies in one of the largest towns in Lancashire, in which he stated that 'the number of burials during the last two years had fallen off considerably, although the cholera raged in this town: the diminution in the number of deaths was principally among children under five years of age.' And to what did he ascribe this? To the fact, that the mothers are able to go home much earlier, and to give that attention to the children which no hired service could bestow.

Two of the registrars, those of Heaton-Norris in Stockport, and of Deansgate in Manchester also ascribe in a great measure the very great mortality of infants in their respective districts to the want of the care and attention of a mother.†

One of the chief evils produced by the children being left under the care of hired nurses, is the temptation which it sets before those nurses of dosing the children with some narcotic, in order to perform their task with as much ease to themselves as possible. The nurses are very frequently laundresses or superannuated old women, who from occupation or indolence are induced to secure as much leisure as possible to themselves, at whatever cost to the children.‡ Of the prevalence of this practice and its noxious effects we have extracted much evidence from the *Morning Chronicle*. The

* Report, Health of Towns, p. 185.

† Registrar-General's Ninth Report, p. 28.

‡ *M. C.* Jan. 4, 1850.

able correspondent of that paper seems to have taken much pains in collecting information on this subject, having examined a great number of druggists and factory hands for that purpose. Many of the druggists show great reluctance in admitting that the practice prevails to any extent, although, while they deny the fact, their shop-windows are crowded with announcements of the medicine under various names, such as Godfrey's Cordial, Mother's Quietness, Soothing Syrup, &c. Many however give evidence as to the very large quantities constantly sold. In Ashton 15 druggists sold on an average about six gallons per week of these preparations. In Preston 21 druggists sold in one week 68 lbs. of narcotics, of which but a very small quantity is stated to have been for the use of adults; indeed it appears a mistake to suppose that laudanum is frequently used as a stimulant instead of spirits by older persons in manufacturing districts, for medical men say they know little or nothing of such a practice. A calculation of the quantity of Godfrey sold in Preston gave an allowance of half an ounce weekly to each family, supposing that 1600 families were in the habit of using it.*

In Ashton, and probably in Manchester, many of these preparations are sold at the public-houses, and in small general shops.† On market-days, the people from the surrounding neighbourhood are much in the habit of coming to the druggists' shops for pennyworths of Godfrey for their children.‡

Godfrey and similar medicines are made in different proportions by different druggists, generally Godfrey contains an ounce and a half of pure laudanum to the quart. Infants' cordial is stronger, containing about two teaspoonfuls to the quart; and occasionally paregoric, which is one-fourth part as strong as laudanum, is used. The stronger it is, the faster it is sold. The dose is from half a teaspoonful to two teaspoonfuls; but if the woman finds that the effect of this

* Report, Health of Towns, p. 183. † *M. C.* 28 Dec. 1849.

‡ *M. C.* 4 Jan. 1850.

diminishes as the child gets used to it, she increases the dose. Often, too, she will come to the druggists and buy pennyworths of Godfrey; after a time she will return, saying this is not made so strong as it used to be, and she must have something better; then as the child gets still more accustomed to the drug, she determines to make the stuff herself, and for this purpose buys aniseed, treacle, and sugar, adding as much laudanum or, if that is too costly, as much crude opium as will serve her purpose.

One poor woman who had sold Godfrey in a general shop, on being asked whether she used to sell it, said, 'Oh yes, we used to make it and sell for children when they were cross, but the people did not think ours was strong enough.' 'What did you make it of?' 'We took a penn'orth of aniseed, a quarter of a pound of treacle, and a penn'orth of laudanum (a quarter of an ounce); then we stewed down the aniseed with water, and mixed up the whole in a quart bottle.' 'And so this stuff was too weak?' 'Ay, that it was. I could have sold it fast enough if I had made it stronger, but I dare not do it for fear of getting into trouble.' 'Did you ever give it to your own children?' 'Yes; but I never put a penn'orth of laudanum into the bottle, I give it to them out of'*

Many of the druggists speak of the pernicious effects of these doses, and say that it is very easy to discover when they have been administered, by the condition of the child. One made the rather significant remark, that he had known a great deal more Godfrey given formerly than there was now, for coroners' inquests were a good check. One of the factory medical-inspectors, Mr. John Greg Harrison, says, on this subject:—

The consequences produced by the system of drugging children are, suffusion of the brain, and an extensive train of mesenteric and glandular diseases. The child sinks into a low torpid state, wastes away to a skeleton except the stomach, producing what is known as pot-belly. If the children survive this treatment they are often weakly and stunted for life. To this drugging system and to defective nursing its certain concomitant, and not to any fatal effect inherent in factory labour, the great infant mortality of cotton towns must be ascribed.†

Perhaps it may be objected here that the mothers are as

* *M. C.* Jan. 4, 1850.

† *Ibid.*

prone as the nurses to consult their comfort by administering drugs to their children. But as the interest of the mother in the child's welfare infinitely transcends that of the nurse, this objection hardly seems a plausible one. And, in fact, according to the evidence given by druggists and other persons, it appears that, though the mothers sometimes give narcotics to their children with the view of obtaining an undisturbed night's rest, by far the greatest proportion is administered by nurses in whose charge the children are left during the day. These persons perform their task by leaving the child to sleep through the day in a stupified state produced by drugs, often administering the dose in quantities much larger than those ordered by the druggists. That there is a very general suspicion of the use of narcotics by the nurses, is evinced by the fact that when the children are ailing, the mothers will often take them to the druggists, asking them with great anxiety whether they think that sleeping-stuff has had anything to do with it.* Mr. Brown, a surgeon in Preston, mentions a child, whose mother brought it to him for a little medicine; suspecting it had been injured by narcotics, he advised her to stay at home and attend to it herself, and the child recovered in a few days.†

Another druggist in Manchester mentions that the mothers often come to him in great trouble, asking what he thinks can be the matter with the children, and that though he knows very well, he dare not tell them, or they would go and charge the nurse with sickening the child, and the nurse would make a disturbance, daring him to prove what he could not prove legally. Some of the factory hands examined by the correspondent of the *Morning Chronicle* give evidence to the following effect:—

One intelligent male operative in Salford stated that he and his wife had put out their first child to be nursed.

The nurse gave the baby sleeping stuff and it died in nine weeks. A neighbour told his wife how the baby had been dosed, but the nurse

* *M. C.*, Jan. 4, 1850.

† Report, Health of Towns, p. 184.

denied that the child had got anything of the kind. They never sent out a child to be nursed again. For that one they paid 3s. 6*d.* a week, and the weeks that the nurse washed for it, 4s. The mother had to get up at four in the morning and carry it to the nurse's, but the distance was too far for her to suckle it at noon, so the child had no milk until the nurse brought it home at night. The nurses are often old women who take in washing, and sometimes they have three or four children to take care of. The mother can often smell laudanum in the child's breath when it comes home.*

Another operative in the same mill said:—

He had put out one child to be nursed, and he and his missus had rued it sorely ever since. The child, a girl, had never been healthy or strong, and the doctors told them when she was fourteen months old that she had been dosed, and how it would be with her. They paid 5s. a week to the nurse; his wife then earned 15s. a week in a mill. At present, he thought 5s. a week was about the average paid for nursing children. The nurses very often took in washing, and put the children to sleep by drugging them. He had six children, and they were all healthy except the first.*

Another woman in a mill at Chorlton had put out all her children to nurse, and had lost none of them;

But she had a good, kind nurse, a married woman, not one of the regular old nurses who made a trade of it. She had often heard of children getting sleeping-stuff; it made them that they were always dozing and never cared for food: they pined away: their heads got big, and they died. She carried her own child to the nurse every morning, rising a full hour before she went to the mill for the purpose, because the nurse lived some way off. The nurse did not rise at the same time, but she (the mother) put the baby into bed to her, and left it there till the evening. She did not suckle it in the day, because it was too far for her to go. All her children were thriving.*

One additional proof† of the heartlessness with which these poor children are treated, and of the impression that their days are numbered, (even it be not proof of something more sinister than the practices above described) we cannot refrain from quoting here. A collector to one of the burial clubs in Preston mentions that he is acquainted with cases in which hired nurses have speculated on the lives of infants

* *M. C.*, Jan. 4, 1850.

† Report, Health of Towns, p. 187.

committed to their charge by entering them in burial clubs. He mentions one case where two young women proposed to him to enter a child into the society in which he holds office, offering to pay the premium alternately. Upon inquiry in conformity with his usual custom, as to the relation subsisting between them and the child, he learned that the child's mother was dead, and that the infant itself was placed at nurse with the mother of these young women.

As instances of the neglect in other ways that these poor children meet with, we may mention the great number of children constantly lost in Manchester. During the last four years, ending 1848, rather more than 4000 children have been lost each year; and of these nearly half have been restored to their friends by the police, the remainder having been found by means of a hue and cry raised by the parents themselves.*

There is another cause for the mortality among the poor which appears capable of mitigation, and this is the great neglect of medical advice for their children evinced by the poor themselves. Mr. Holden,† one of the honorary surgeons to the Preston Dispensary, remarks on this circumstance as strikingly exhibited by the great discrepancy between the number of deaths under five years old of those who were dispensary patients, and the number of similar deaths among the remainder of the poor.

From the records of the dispensary it appears that while there was an infant mortality of forty-four per cent. in the worst streets visited by the agent of the Charitable Society, only eight per cent. died under the cognizance of the medical officers of the dispensary; and yet if the wretched inhabitants of these worst streets sought medical aid at all, they would seek it most likely where it would be obtained without charge. It is known that druggists are often resorted to for medicine and advice by the poor, and probably, in some or many cases assistance from such quarters may have been obtained for

* Police Report, Manchester, 1848.

† Report, Health of Towns, Preston, p. 182.

sick children ; but after making all allowances it is to be feared that among certain classes of the poor, a great amount of infant death takes place without anything worthy the name of medical assistance having been obtained or even sought.

Mr. Holden goes on to state,* that during the years 1839 and 1840, when the smallpox was prevalent in Preston and many hundreds of children were dying of it, very few children were brought to the dispensary to be vaccinated, although the operation was performed there gratis. When he was appointed vaccinator he found the parents so negligent in bringing their children to the dispensary for this purpose that he vaccinated the children at their own dwellings, and even then had often to combat objections raised by the parents.

The registrar of Hulme,† in the Chorlton district of Manchester, remarks on the very large number of infant deaths among the lower orders from stomach disorders during the quarter ending September 1846, whilst among the rich but very few children died from the same causes; and this difference is ascribed partly to the latter class not having been predisposed to such complaints by the use of drugs, and partly to their having had the benefit of immediate medical advice. A large number of infant deaths are mentioned in this report as being not certified—*i. e.*, where the child has been attended by no regular medical practitioner, but either by druggists or not at all.

On this subject the registrar of Deansgate‡ in Manchester remarks that out of 279 deaths only 126 were certified, leaving 153 who died without any medical help, or with only that of druggists; and amongst the cases of certified deaths the medical man was in many instances not called in until the child was already in a hopeless state. He proceeds to lament the great want of institutions for the assistance of the poor—saying, that in Manchester there is but one children's dispensary, and that has but two medical officers.

* Report, Health of Towns, pp. 184, 185.

† Registrar-General, p. 27.

‡ *Ibid.* p. 28.

CHAPTER II.

THE PROPOSED REMEDY.

It is with the hope of abating the evils on which we have dwelt that we have been induced to give the public some account of the establishment of public nurseries (called *crèches*) in Paris. In that city the evils resulting from the neglect of children have been so strongly felt, that of late years an attempt has been made to apply some remedy to them by means of the establishments in question. These are institutions where children under the age of two years are received for the day and placed under the care of efficient nurses who are superintended by medical men and lady visitors. It appears, from the statistics of various *crèches* in the year 1846, that the average cost of each child there was not more than the mothers used to pay to the hired nurses, who formerly took charge of the children—*i.e.* about 7*d.* a day; and for this the child receives many superior advantages, such as airy rooms, good food, medical superintendence, generally washing, and sometimes little luxuries, such as small playgrounds and balconies.

For the purpose of giving the English reader some idea of these establishments, apparently productive of so much comfort to the labouring poor, we have made a partial translation from a French work on this subject, written by M. Marbeau, the original inventor of the plan, and have added a few extracts from a book entitled *Visite à la Crèche Modèle,*” being an account of the condition of the various *crèches* in Paris in the year 1846, within two years of the first trial of them. The first part of the translation relates the circumstances which originally led to the conception of such an institution, and gives a short account of the opening of the first one. The latter part gives an account of the regulations and requisites for *crèches* or nurseries similar to those established in Paris. To this is added a short and necessarily imperfect estimate of the practicability of such a scheme here.

It will be seen that the Parisian establishments are mainly supported by charitable donations, and we have given the account of these accordingly. But though we have thought fit to inform the English public of the good deeds of our Parisian neighbours, we by no means desire to imitate them in every particular. On the contrary, we think that (however the case may stand in France) it is in England absolutely essential to the general adoption of our scheme and to its healthy action on the poor, that the proposed nurseries should be supported by the poor themselves. Accordingly, a portion of this work will be directed to an attempt to prove that the hope of establishing self-supporting nurseries is by no means a desperate one.

Likewise, many of the comforts and conveniences described in M. Marbeau's work as requisites for a *crèche*, would, in our judgment, be too luxurious (at least, in the outset) for such an establishment as we contemplate for England.

Here it may be fit to notice two objections which are commonly made to these and similar institutions. The first is, that they effect a separation between mother and child; and if this objection were well founded in fact, the weight of it would be irresistible. But though it is very lamentable that such a separation should exist, it is idle to shut our eyes to the fact that it does exist already. It exists independently of our scheme, has its origin in causes wholly unconnected with the children themselves, and cannot and will not be abated by any amount of evil which they may suffer in consequence. It is obvious that the practice of sending out children to nurse is so universal in factory towns, and so inseparable from the present condition, and perhaps from any conceivable condition, of society in such places, that to ignore it is impossible, and that whatever might be *wished*, the only thing to be *done* is so to treat the case, that both the children and mothers may suffer as little as possible by the separation. It may be added, that the same objection was urged with equal or greater plausibility against the establishment of infant schools, yet few now will be hardy enough to contend that a great balance of good has not resulted from such institutions.

The second objection is, that to provide a place for the reception of infants is to encourage young women in contracting early marriages and other more unlawful connexions. We only wish that we could observe among the poor such prudent foresight as this objection assumes. But those who are not deterred from imprudence or vice by the prospect of poverty and degradation, will hardly receive any amount of encouragement in such courses by knowing that their children may be sent to a good nurse instead of a bad one. This would probably be a sufficient answer to the objection, even if it were proposed to support the nurseries by eleemosynary contributions. But as our proposal is not to confer pecuniary benefits on the parents but personal ones on the child, the objection must be treated as farfetched and wholly without weight.

It would besides be easy to ensure the respectability of the parents by requiring references to their clergyman or their employer or some other person whose testimony would be a sufficient guarantee. And as to early marriages, it seems difficult to encourage them more than they are encouraged already, it being notorious that few factory girls reach the age of twenty without finding a husband. We are, however, ready to admit that there may be evils resulting from a public nursery, and can only reply that no human work is free from them. If on the whole it seems fair to conclude that a balance of good will be effected by public nurseries, there is good ground for attempting to establish them, notwithstanding the apprehension that their working may not be entirely free from harm.

We will now introduce our readers to the Parisian *crèches*.

M. Marbeau, who describes himself as *adjoint au maire du premier arrondissement de Paris*, and who is the author of various works on political economy, was instructed by a committee appointed for the purpose, to make a report on the asylums* of one district in Paris. He made the report, and

* The asylums of Paris appear to answer to our infant schools, except that they are entirely gratuitous.

remarked with satisfaction the admirable effects of the asylums.

With what care (he says) does society watch over the children of the labouring classes! There are the asylums for those from two to six years old; after that, the primary schools and the classes for adults. What charity and what prudence are manifested in such institutions! But why not begin our task still earlier, and watch over the child from its cradle? Maternal love certainly supplies the first needs of the child; it is dependent on her, and surely society would do nothing to separate them. But yet, when the mother is obliged to work away from her own home, what becomes of the poor child?

Struck by these reflections, M. Marbeau resolved to visit the homes of some of the poor women dependent on public charity, and proceeded to make inquiries at Chaillot, a miserable suburb of Paris. He describes his first visit thus:—

I entered a filthy back court, and inquired for Madame Girard, a washerwoman. She came down, unwilling to let me enter her room, which, she said, was too dirty to be seen. She carried a newborn infant in her arms, while a child about eighteen months old clung to her side. 'Madame,' I said, 'you have three children; where is the other one?' 'At the asylum.' 'Is he comfortable there?' 'Oh yes, sir: what a comfort these asylums are for us poor mothers!' 'You are a washerwoman, and your work is done at a distance from here. What becomes of these two little ones when you go to work?' 'A neighbour takes care of them.' 'And what do you pay for that?' 'Fourteen sous a day.' 'Fourteen sous for both?' 'No, sir; fourteen sous apiece—six sous for their food, and eight to the nurse: when I find them in food I only pay eight sous.' 'And how much do you earn?' 'Two francs a day; but I don't get work every day.' I hastened to the nurse. She was occupying a miserable room, looking after three little children playing on the floor. 'You receive public relief, I think?' I remarked. 'Yes, sir; here is my order.' 'How many children have you to look after?' 'Five or six, sir; but the asylums have injured me greatly!' 'How much do you get for each child?' 'Eight sous for taking care of it, and six sous for its food.' 'Who furnishes the linen?' 'The mothers bring enough for the day in the morning, and take back the dirty things with the child in the evening.' 'And how do you feed those who are not yet weaned?' 'Their mothers come and suckle them during meal-times.'

When M. Marbeau left the house, he reflected that what this poor woman did in the midst of misery might be far better effected by charity. He represented the state of

things to the officers charged with the relief of the poor, and explained to them his project of a *crèche*. A committee was appointed, and M. Marbeau showed them, 1st, that it was very needful to assist these poor mothers and their helpless children; 2ndly, that his idea was practicable; 3rdly, that the expenses of the one first established should be reduced as low as possible, and that the mothers should pay the nurses' wages, leaving the rest to charity. No assistance could be obtained from the public charitable fund, but many subscriptions from persons connected with it were received.

The superior of the *Sœurs de la Sagesse* provided, near the house of refuge, which is under her care, a very humble place, but which sufficed for our first attempt. This place was put at our disposal on the 8th, and on the 14th November our *crèche* was opened. Its furniture consisted of a very few chairs, some baby chairs, a crucifix, and a framed copy of the rules of the establishment. The cost of its fitting up was barely 360 francs (nearly 15*l.*) At first, there were but eight cradles, but charity soon furnished means sufficient for twelve; and linen was plentifully supplied. The superintending committee chose two nurses amongst the poor women out of work; both were mothers, and worthy the confidence of other mothers. Agreeably to the rules laid down, the committee refused to admit any other children but those whose mothers were poor, well conducted, and who had work at a distance from their own homes. At first there were scarcely twelve children, but this number was soon exceeded. When the *Crèche St. Louis d'Antin* was opened, there was not one single child registered there; a week afterwards there were six candidates, and a month after that, eighteen. They were obliged to enlarge it. There can be nothing more interesting than the sight of this little *crèche* between two and three o'clock, when the mothers come and suckle their children for the second time in the day; they seem so pleased to embrace their little ones, to rest from their work, and to bless the institution which procures them so many benefits. One of them used to pay 75 centimes ($7\frac{1}{2}d.$) a day—half her own earnings—and the child was badly attended to; she now only pays 20, and he is as well taken care of as the child of a rich man. Another kept her little boy eight years old from school to look after the baby, and now he is able to attend school regularly. Another is pleased to tell you that her husband has become less brutal since she paid ten sous less for her child—ten sous a day make such a difference in a poor family. There is another who was only confined a fortnight ago suckling her newborn child. She is asked how she would have done without the *crèche*: 'Ah, sir, it would have been as it was with his

poor brother! I sell apples, and can scarcely earn fifteen sous a day; I could not spare fourteen to have him looked after. Poor little fellow! he died when he was fourteen months old, from want of care. Oh, sir, my little angel would have been living now, if there had been a *crèche* six months ago!

When the founders of the first *crèche* saw that it had answered beyond their expectations, and did so much good at so little cost, they proceeded to establish and organize others in the poorest parts of the district.

REGULATIONS.

The first part of the regulations for a *crèche* consists almost entirely of arrangements for the meetings, deliberations, and other proceedings of persons who are to undertake the management of it. Amongst these it is scarcely needful to notice any but one, which directs that two or three of the charitably disposed lady members of the committee shall undertake the inspection and management of the *crèches*, and that they shall be daily visited by some charitably disposed medical man, also a member of the committee.

RULES FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF THE CRÈCHE.

1. The *crèche* to be opened every morning at half-past five, and closed every evening at half-past eight, as a day's work in Paris lasts from six to eight o'clock, and it is needful to give the mother time to bring and fetch away her child. The *crèche* to be closed on Sundays and holidays.

2. Those children only to be admitted who are under two years of age, whose mothers are poor and well conducted, and employed at a distance from home during the daytime.

3. Each child to be vaccinated on its admission, unless this has been previously done, and the certificate of vaccination and register of birth to be given to the secretary. No child to be admitted while ill.

4. The mother to bring her child properly wrapt up and provided with linen for the day. The linen to be marked

with the same number as that on the drawer in the press in which it is kept, which number will again correspond with that on the cradle which the child occupies in the nursery. The mother to come punctually and suckle the child at appointed hours, and to take it back at night.

5. Infants brought up by hand to be similarly provided by their mothers.

6. The mother to pay twenty centimes (or twopence) daily to the nurses for the care of one child, and thirty for two.

7. The nurses to be chosen and superintended by the lady managers.

8. The strictest cleanliness to be observed by the nurses in the persons both of themselves and the children, as well as throughout the nursery itself. The temperature to be even and moderate, and the ventilator kept in action.

All the cot furniture to be spread out during the night, and the nursery to be well freshened by open windows early every morning. The linen closet to be kept aired, and the doors closed. Dirty linen to be thrown into the water immediately. The nurses not to be allowed to admit strangers into the nursery.

9. The wages of the nurses to be fixed at 125 centimes (being one shilling and one halfpenny) per diem; and under no pretext are they to accept any further remuneration or present from the mothers. In case of transgression of these rules, the nurse to be discharged instantly without compensation.

10. The head nurse to take charge of the furniture of the nursery, and to be held responsible for injury done to it. All the linen and furniture to be marked with a cross.

11. The lady managers and inspectors and the physicians to see that suitable food is administered to the children.

12. All complaints to be preferred to the lady managers.

REQUISITES OF A NURSERY.

The principal objects of a nursery are to provide wholesome and sufficient food, pure air, uninterrupted attention, cleanliness, and warmth for the children, and to give to their

mothers the full command of their time and strength, unimpaired by anxieties on account of their children. Every arrangement must be made with these objects in view, and every tendency to consider the means as an end, or to sacrifice the principal object to accessory ones, must be checked. When the object is clearly defined, the next step is to choose the simplest, surest, and most economical methods of attaining it.

The Situation and Arrangement.—A healthy, airy, open place should be chosen, in the centre of an indigent and populous locality,* in the neighbourhood of a dispensary, and not far from the school, that the mother may be able to convoy two or three children at once.

The nursery should contain the following accommodation:—One or two rooms for the children; a kitchen, unless there is every convenience for a cooking-stove in one of the rooms; a closet for linen, and one for wood. If in addition there is a little open court or well-gravelled garden, as at Chaillot, the advantage is great, as the elder children can play about there in safety. It would be well that one at least of the nurses should lodge at the nursery for the sake of receiving the children every morning.

The room dedicated to the children's use† should be boarded, and large enough to allow the cradles to be placed at least half a yard from one another and to permit a considerable space for moving about between them and the centre of the room, where might be placed the seats and chairs for visitors, and the bed.‡

* It is obvious that these first two requisites must frequently be incompatible; but they should nevertheless both be borne in mind and aimed at, as far as is possible under the circumstances of each case.

† From *Rapport des Médecins de la Crèche*.

‡ It appears that in most nurseries there is a bed or mattress, either with or without compartments, where the children can be laid down at any time.

The windows should be wide and high, so as rapidly to admit a fresh supply of air.*

In another room there should be a sink with one tap of cold and one of hot water, in order that the dirty linen may be soaked and wrung out there and hung up to dry.

2. Food to be administered under medical advice, subject to the approbation of the respective mothers.

3. The temperature of course must be kept even and moderate.

4. Cleanliness is another matter which speaks for itself.

5. *Sanatory Arrangements.*—Everything which may affect the children's health is to be subject to the physician's orders—viz., the arrangement of the cradles, the disposition of the lights, the nursing and the general treatment of the children. The simplest articles of medical apparatus may be kept on the premises.

Nurses.—A uniform dress should distinguish the nurses from the mothers and from the visitors to the nursery. One nurse may have charge of five children, or two nurses may undertake twelve, if disposed to assist one another. The elder should hold the position of head nurse. Their wages have been fixed by a calculation of the average earnings of women in Paris. The average between 50 centimes (the lowest wages paid) and 2 francs (the highest) is 1 franc 25 centimes, and this is just sufficient to enable them to live and to keep themselves tidy.

The hope of a little additional reward will be found a great inducement to exertion on the part of these poor women; and it is no bad plan to bestow an occasional present on those mothers who observe the rules of the nursery with the greatest exactness.

The mothers must daily on leaving the nursery pay their twopence to the nurses; it will be less grating to both parties

* M. Marbeau observes of these, and of many following observations, that they are meant as useful hints for the future, but that in the meantime they are content to go on with inferior accommodation.

than if the money were paid directly to the lady manager. We would not if we could abolish all payment on the part of the mothers, as the idea that everything should be done for the children of the poor by others would be injurious to them in many ways.

Furniture.—The whole necessary furniture for a nursery may be comprised in the following articles:—a few iron cradles, some baby-chairs, a few chairs, a thermometer, some mats, and a bathing-tub in the children's room; a few cooking utensils, a filter, and some jugs, in the kitchen; a press with the different shelves numbered according to their owners, some swaddling clothes, and a few other things kept for occasional use in the linen closet.

Expenses and Resources of a Nursery.—Rent must be paid, the furniture kept in repair, food provided for the children, and something added to make up the nurses' wages; a good deal of fuel also is wanted in winter.

These expenses amount on an average to 70 centimes per diem for each child—*i. e.*, about 20 centimes for the nurses, 20 for rent, fuel, and other general expenses, (this item is about a third less in summer,) and 30 centimes for different kinds of food. According to calculations made with great exactness, these are the daily expenses; but, as the mothers have always paid with great regularity their 20 centimes, the expense to the charity of each child has been only 50 centimes per diem.*

* Expenses for the month of January, 119 francs 85 centimes—that is, for 26 days, when the nursery was open, and there were 277 attendances of children, or about 10 children per diem.

Rent	11 francs 67 centimes
Fuel	36 „ 50 „
Additional to nurses	18 „ 75 „
Lights	3 „ 25 „
	68 „ 17 „

The rest was spent in milk, coal, sugar, butter, semolina, bread, and other current expenses. The ordinary expenses therefore for a month of 31 days, are 119 francs 85 centimes, or rather less than 4 francs a day.

CHAPTER III.

ON THE POSSIBILITY OF A SELF-SUPPORTING NURSERY.

WE have before given our opinion that the projected nurseries, in order to take a really useful place in the framework of society must be able to support themselves. We would therefore gladly address ourselves to the task of proving the possibility of such self-support. But we feel strongly, both the absence of materials for such a calculation, and our own inability to form an opinion on the subject. Still, it seems not unreasonable to expect that (if the first difficulties of establishing and furnishing a nursery were overcome) the institution could be maintained at the same cost as that now incurred for private nurses. This sum we find stated variously, from 1s. 6d. to 4s. weekly; but we are informed on good authority that about 6d. a day may be considered an average charge for taking care of an infant in Manchester.

Of course we can arrive at no correct conclusion respecting the cost of an English nursery from the expenses of a Parisian one; but it appears from the French reports that for the average sum of 6d. or 7d. a day for each child, the infants enjoy attention and care from well-selected nurses, good food, good air, good temperature, and, in many cases, such additions as wash-houses, gardens, and balconies. This will appear more clearly from the annexed table, drawn up from a little French work entitled *Les Crèches Modèles*, being the report of a gentleman who examined into the state of the Parisian *crèches* in the winter of 1846.*

* Since writing the above, we have met with some additional information from a little work entitled *Manuel de la Crèche St. Louis d'Antin*, which enters with greater minuteness than the other works into the details of the *crèche*, and gives some useful hints as to the prices of the things necessary for one. This little work would probably be very useful for any person to consult who was desirous of founding a public nursery.

Summary of the State of the Parisian Crèches in 1846.*

Name.	Accommodation.	Registered.	Present.	Premises, &c., and other particulars.	Average cost per Diem.	Rent.	Number of Nurses.
St. Pierre at Chaillot	12 cradles, 1 bed	25	. . .	{ Garden, court, and shed for drying linen; boarded rooms, thorough ventilation . . . }	70 cen- } times. }	500 francs	—
St. Philippe de Roule	15 ditto ditto	40	. . .	{ Garden, kitchen, and linen-room . . . }	75 „	—	—
St. Louis d'Antin . . .	31 ditto . . .	50	30 to 35	{ Two light airy rooms; tiled floors, covered with straw mats; balcony . . . }	60 „	1120 „	5
St. Vincent de Paul	12 ditto . . .	30	12 to 15	{ One room, a kitchen, and linen-room. Food, meat-soup three times a week . . . }	70 „	320 „	3
St. Pierre . . .	32 ditto . . .	29	25	{ Rooms with tiled floors; kitchen, linen-room, wash-house, garden . . . }	. . .	1100 „	—
St. Geneviève . . .	22 ditto, 1 bed	40	30 to 40	{ Kitchen and drying-room . . . }	65 „	650 „	7; 1 in kitchen
Bethlem	15 ditto ditto	50	18 to 20	{ Boarded floors, kitchen, matron's room, linen & washing furnished. Food—9 o'clock, herb-soup; 1, milk porridge; 5, meat-soup, bread and potatoes between hours . . . }	70 „	600 „	—
La Madeleine . . .	15 ditto . . .	26	15 to 18	{ Large balcony, with awning; women's workroom . . . }	. . .	1200 „	3
St. Gervais . . .	24 ditto 1 bed	80	18 to 20	{ Kitchen and washhouse (recently established) . . . }	. . .	600 „	—

* Where there are omissions in the information here given, corresponding gaps occur in the original, which is not drawn up in a tabular form.

It will be observed, that only do the *crèches* possess in many instances such additions as those above named, but also that the rent is high, the number of nurses in many cases large, and the expense of fuel, no inconsiderable item, is very great in Paris.

Taking our leave of our French fellow-workers with many hearty wishes for their good success, we will conclude with a short notice of what we believe to be the only attempt to establish a public nursery in England.

In the month of March last, one or two persons who had interested themselves in the subject hired a house in Nassau-street in the parish of Marylebone and fitted up part of it for the reception of infants. As it has been in existence little more than three months, its success whether in a social or pecuniary point of view is still a matter of uncertainty.

The following facts, however, are encouraging with respect to its social effect:—From the time of its first opening, the number of children has gradually and steadily increased; the parents pay their contributions with the utmost regularity, and speak with much gratitude of the benefits derived from it.

Moreover it was found that during Whitsuntide the number of children usually attending was reduced by more than half. This is a trifling matter, but it seems to show that the system does not create a coolness in the parents towards their children, but that when the mothers have leisure they keep their babies at home. As regards finance, this particular nursery was established chiefly for eleemosynary purposes, and therefore affords no criterion of the practicability of a self-supporting one.*

* Probably it would be impossible to establish self-supporting nurseries in London. The class of matrons who go out daily to labour in factory towns is more numerous, more regularly employed, more liberally remunerated, and altogether further removed from the bottom of society than is the case in other towns. Most London mothers, who get good and regular employment, work at home. Few of those who go out to work could afford 6*d.* a day for the care of a child.

Since the above was in type we have heard of a nursery at Kensington, which appears to be a parochial charity.

By its means, however, it has become possible to make some rough estimate of the probable relation of the expenses to the receipts of a well-attended nursery. We accordingly subjoin an account of the actual expenditure of the Nassau-street Nursery, and such speculations as we have thought ourselves justified in making.

One Quarter's Expenses.

Rent—two large rooms, nurses' room, and kitchen	. £10	0	0	
Wages—two nurses at 17s. a week	. . . . .	11	5	0
Extra attendance of one girl, when wanted, at 5s. a week		1	8	0
Coal, candles, and soap.	. . . . .	2	6	0
Food and sundries	. . . . .	1	0	0
		<hr/>		
		£25	19	0

This nursery is calculated to hold thirty children, and of course the larger the number that attend, the smaller the expense of each child will be, for such expenses as rent, coal, and other items do not increase at all with the greater number of children. In the item of wages also the expense will not be increased in proportion to the greater number of children, for after the services of the first or superintending nurses are secured, mere girls whose wages are very small will answer every purpose as underlings.

Hitherto the number attending the Nassau-street Nursery has not been above twelve, (as it is only just beginning to be known in the neighbourhood,) and the attendance mentioned above (two nurses and one girl) has sufficed for these.

If, therefore, we double the items of wages, extra attendance, and food, we may arrive at something like a calculation of what the cost of maintaining this nursery might be, supposing it was full and the children paid 6d. a day for one quarter, or thirteen weeks:—

Rent . . . . .	. £10	0	0	
Wages . . . . .	. . . . .	22	10	0
Extra attendance		2	16	0
Coal, candles, and soap		2	6	0
Sundries and food		2	0	0
		<hr/>		
		£39	12	0

The payments of thirty children at 6*d.* a day, for thirteen weeks of six days each, would be as follow:—

Per diem	6 <i>d.</i> × 30 =	15	^{s.}
Per week, 6 days		6	
		<hr style="width: 50%; margin-left: auto; margin-right: 0;"/>	
		90 =	£4 10 0
Per quarter, 13 weeks		13	
		<hr style="width: 50%; margin-left: auto; margin-right: 0;"/>	
		270	
		90	
		<hr style="width: 50%; margin-left: auto; margin-right: 0;"/>	
	20)	1170	
		<hr style="width: 50%; margin-left: auto; margin-right: 0;"/>	
		£58 10 0	

This yields apparently such a large surplus, that we think any one might safely undertake a public nursery at 5*d.* a day, the receipts being as follows:—

Per diem	5 <i>d.</i> × 30 =	12	^{s.} ^{d.}
Per week, 6 days		6	6
		<hr style="width: 50%; margin-left: auto; margin-right: 0;"/>	
		75	0
Per quarter, 13 weeks		13	
		<hr style="width: 50%; margin-left: auto; margin-right: 0;"/>	
		225	
		75	
		<hr style="width: 50%; margin-left: auto; margin-right: 0;"/>	
	20)	975	
		<hr style="width: 50%; margin-left: auto; margin-right: 0;"/>	
		£48 15	

It will be perceived, that in the above calculation we have estimated the wages of the nurses at a higher rate than they need be; and it will be borne in mind that, in manufacturing towns, coal is cheap.

Expenses of first starting.

The cost of first starting was as follows:—

Laying on water, high service	£12	3	0
Printing circulars	1	6	0
Furniture for nurses	8	16	0
Ventilators	1	12	6
Eight cradles	6	10	0
Linen and cradle-bedding	6	7	0
Sundries	0	16	0
		<hr style="width: 50%; margin-left: auto; margin-right: 0;"/>	
	£37	10	6

DESCRIPTION.

The Nursery consists of two large and high rooms; on the first floor water has been laid on at high service. There are eight cradles made of wire-work costing 16s. apiece. Wood is not so well adapted for this purpose, as it holds out allurements to other intrusive occupants, and the wire-work from its lightness is found more convenient than iron bands. The bedding is stuffed with cocoa-nut fibre. There is a bath in the room, and a piece of stuffed carpet on which the children can be put down to crawl about.

The rules of the Nursery are as follows:—

INFANT NURSERY,

No. 19, NASSAU STREET, MARYLEBONE.

This Institution is established for the purpose of receiving the children of the married industrious poor during the working hours of the day; namely, from half-past six o'clock in the morning till seven o'clock in the evening.

The affairs of the Institution will be managed by a committee of ladies, who will meet on the first Tuesday in every month to inspect the books and transact all necessary business. And each member of the committee will take her turn as weekly visitor at the nursery.

RULES.

1. Every mother applying for the admission of her child must obtain a recommendation from the clergyman of the parish or a respectable householder of the district in which she resides. Papers of the form required may be had at the nursery.

2. No child will be admitted unless it has been vaccinated and is in a state of health.

3. Children will be received at any age between one month and three years.

4. Threepence a day will be charged for the care and maintenance of each child, fourpence for two of the same family; and it is required that the money be brought with

the child every morning. Otherwise the matron has strict orders to refuse admission.

5. The child's clothing must be perfectly clean. All extra linen is provided by the nursery.

6. Unweaned children may be nursed at the Institution by their mothers during the day.

We will now only add a few words as to the benefits which may reasonably be expected from the proposed scheme. Of those which directly concern the children themselves perhaps enough has been already said; but we should be disappointed if in addition to the direct results incidental advantages, and those no slight ones, did not also accrue.

1. It is a well-established fact, that a rapid infant mortality is accompanied by a proportionally rapid supply of population. Into the causes moral or physical of this phenomenon we will not enter; it is sufficient to state that paradoxical as it may appear the fact is so. Such then being the case, it is obvious that early deaths, while they do not decrease the population, are yet the means of keeping a more numerous portion of it in the most helpless state—producing nothing themselves, and making large demands on the time and labour of others. For not only does this cause increase the infantine as compared with the adult portion of society, but by giving occasion for a greater number of births it reduces women more frequently to a state of sickness and debility. Add to this that death is preceded by ailments; that medical assistance must be had; that funerals are expensive; and it will be seen that early deaths constitute a great burden on the resources of the poor. We say nothing of the sacredness of human life as the first and greatest gift of God—of the obligation which lies on us to preserve it independently of results; of the love that attends these poor infants through their short life, and is torn and anguished by their early death; of the hard brutal indifference which—whether among the casualties of war, the acute pestilences which from time to time have

ravaged great cities, or the chronic ones which everlastingly brood over our factory towns—is invariably found to be engendered by the constant spectacle of rapid and untimely deaths. These considerations will doubtless be present to the mind of every reader; setting them aside therefore as matters not to be discussed here, we assert on the lowest and merest grounds of political economy, that whatever diminishes the amount of infant mortality will to the same extent increase the wealth, the happiness, and the comfort of society.

2. Another indirect result which may fairly be anticipated is that a greater number of children will be left free to enjoy the advantages of education. In the absence of nurses many mothers leave their babies at home in the care of an elder brother or sister or some other child who is usually of very tender years. The consequences of this system are perhaps not more prejudicial to the baby than they are to its childish nurse. The poor child is frequently tasked beyond its physical strength and the strain on its mind is still greater. Instead of being the subject of guidance and assistance, it has to be itself the guide and assistant of others. Instead of being supplied with entertainment and mental aliment, it has to provide such a supply from its own resources. Wanting care itself, it has to exercise foresight for others more helpless than itself, and by its own unassisted strength to protect, watch, soothe, and amuse its infant charge. Such a process leaves the poor little nurse with its intellect, taste, and imagination wholly uncultivated, and with powers of self-reliance and management, wonderful in one so young, but too precocious to remain in a state of vigour. Now if the mothers had the option of sending their babies to be nursed by persons in whom they could place implicit confidence, the majority of them would probably abandon the practice of setting an infant to watch an infant. Thus the elder children would be left at liberty to attend school, or to be disposed of in some way less prejudicial to them than discharging the duties of nurse. And without intending to make any remarks commonplace or otherwise on the blessings of

education, we think it will be admitted that a scheme which would probably have the effect of conveying those blessings to a greater number is at least worthy of consideration.

3. Furthermore though we have come to the conclusion that the projected institutions ought to be self-supporting, we cannot but think that they afford peculiarly advantageous points of contact between the rich and the poor. Now, that the stability of a society depends mainly on the healthiness of the relations between its rich and its poor, we take to be indisputable. We may have powerful armies and navies; we may be able to seize Lahore and bombard the Piræus; we may manufacture, yearly, thousands of acres of broadcloth and millions of miles of cotton prints; we may even invite all nations to display their products in this, the central mart of industry, and all nations may respond to the invitation; but if our rich are selfish and our poor discontented, we are but walking over a surface of ashes beneath which the fires are glowing. In respect of honouring and cherishing the poor as in all other respects, the precepts of our religion will be found to teach the wisest policy and the truest economy. Anything then which has the effect of bringing the various ranks of society into friendly intercourse with one another is so much additional support and cement to the edifice. Now, it seems to us that the separation between rich and poor, which is undeniably great in England, results not so much from the selfishness of the upper classes, or from their disinclination to be friendly with their poorer neighbours, as from the paucity of the opportunities of intercourse which the usages of society supply. When men are at a distance from one another, estrangements, suspicions, hostilities arise; bring them face to face, and a hundred to one but the ill-feelings are dispelled, and are succeeded by confidence and love. Only multiply points of contact, not contact of interests, (for that is as likely to create discord as harmony) but real personal intercourse, and the good feeling which really exists at bottom will be sure to weld them into enduring links of amity.

We are not going to emulate Professor Holloway by insisting that our nostrum is the one *panacea* for the evils of

the day ; but we do say that any scheme tending, or even professing, to unite rich and poor, be it a small scheme or a great one, comprehensive or minute, standing alone or one among many, is worthy at least of attention. And we think it will hardly be denied that a collection of the children of the poor in a public and well-conducted place, would afford opportunities for communication with their parents which do not now exist, and that most of the obstacles which at present deter many ladies from intercourse with the poor in great towns, and which are so well known to the dwellers in those places that it would be useless as well as tedious here to detail them, might by the same means be removed. Moreover, though the poor themselves were to support the necessary expenses of the nurseries, much scope may be afforded for liberality in founding or providing additional comforts for them, if that should be considered expedient; to say nothing of the occasion given for the exercise of numberless charitable offices which are not of a pecuniary nature at all. Of course it may be said of any benevolent or useful institution, that it tends to bind society together; and so it does. The most important of such influences proceed from our ministers of religion, and our schools. We shall probably be thought visionary enthusiasts for naming our humble Nursery in the same breath with such gigantic powers, and claiming for it a relationship with them. Yet what is there which so calls forth the sympathies of our sex as the demands of helpless infancy for assistance? And what mother's heart is not won by kindness shown to her child? If, then, the proposed system be one which would offer the greatest attractions for the rich to assist the poor, and if that assistance would be conveyed through a channel which must reach the hearts of the poor, may we not hope that the effect of it would be, in its own mode and measure more closely to unite the two great orders into which God's providence has divided the world; to humble the rich, to elevate the poor, and to soften and ameliorate both.





