

by others, who have no right of superintendence—the result might be, that whole estates shall be as effectually lost to the wealth and resources of the country, as if buried by an earthquake under water, or, as if some blight of nature had gone over them and bereft them of their powers of vegetation. Now we know not, if the whole history of the world furnishes a more striking demonstration than this, of the mischief that may be done, by attempting to carry into practice a theoretical speculation, which, under the guise and even with the real purpose of benevolence, has for its plausible object, to equalize among the children of one common humanity, the blessings and the fruits of one common inheritance. The truth is that we have not been conducted to the present state of our rights and arrangements respecting property, by any artificial process of legislation at all. The state of property in which we find ourselves actually landed, is the result of a natural process, under which, all that a man earns by his industry is acknowledged to be his own—or, when the original mode of acquisition is lost sight of, all that a man retains by long and undisturbed possession is felt and acknowledged to be his own also. Legislation ought to do no more than barely recognise these principles, and defend its subjects against the violation of them. And when it attempts more than this—when it offers to

And your committee apprehend, from the petition before them, that this is one of many parishes that are fast approaching to a state of dereliction.”

The inquiries of the present Poor law Commission have led to a still more aggravated and confirmed view of the evils of the system.