

P. Matthew

of good, no aerial castles of hope on this Earth to build up—we can only judge of any future life from the experience of this, & only the most selfish instincts remain. The affections & family ties are stronger in the labor class than in the more educated & richer, & banishment from all they regard more desolating & debasing to the mind. They having their social relations broken up, have less of vanity to be administered to, no property to be vain of, have no tie to life, & in the majority of cases would prefer death to the poor house.

I know the poor board of Enol will not prefer a poor House to the present system, & I hope your Lordship will not urge it. I should feel pleasure & I know that others would also do so were you to say at next meeting that it might be as well to hold by our old system. I am aware that in many places the poor-house is thought to work well. It is however generating a hardness of feeling incompatible with an aristocracy primogeniture land system & a hereditary privileged class, where providence is not required. I remain,

The Right Hon.

Lord Kenning.

My Lord, your ob^t. servant

P. Matthew

Gardner Hill Feb. 2/67

My Lord,

Pardon me in laying before you the following ideas regarding the utility of a Poor House for this district.

Taking a cold philosophic view of the subject your Lordship is perhaps right. It is proper that a compulsory assessment levied from the industrious to support those who are not capable to support themselves, should be employed in the most economic manner compatible with humanity & Christian feeling, & in such a way as encourage providence in the population. There are however two classes who require support 1st Orphans, children who have lost their Breadwinner, & those disabled by accident or natural defect. 2nd Old people who have been improvident while able to work

— who have wasted their winnings upon
spirits, tobacco &c. or other unwise expen-
-ture. The first class might indeed in most
cases have entered into insurance Societies &
thus ensured a support. But I think it is
better that mankind should trust in themselves
individually in accumulating a small family
capital. It both serves to ward off poverty
under mishap or calamity, & to raise the family
should all go well, while it affords a much
stronger stimulus to exert workmanship &
industry. On this account I greatly prefer the
Savings Bank system to provident Societies, which
are only calculated to keep the whole population ^{bordering upon misery.}
The above class should never enter a
poor house—prison, but be healthfully lodged
& cared for in private families under due
supervision, & in a majority of cases with their
own nearest relations, except in the case of
absolute mania. The second class are the
only fit objects for the wretched position of a poor
^{house} existence, necessary, it may be, in terrorem.

In Scotland generally there is a
strong feeling in the labor population of
independence, & not to be recipients of public
charity. As we stand on the 3 parishes I think
Your Lordship will find by far the greater
amount of the appointment required for the
support of the first class for which a poor
house is improper in sympathetic humanity
as well as in philosophic utility,—I need not
say in Christian principle.

Has Your Lordship ever thought of the
low—worse than brutal, character that con-
-finement in a poor house is calculated to generate.
—with selfishness & subjection to the lowest animal
instincts? It is not a mere subsistence such as will
preserve life, that is worth existing for. It is the
society, & desire to help in the wellbeing of those
that are nearest & dearest to us that renders
life desirable. In the poor-house, parental, filial
& the other ties & family affections are ignored.
In this horrible prison we have no plans or purpose