

PAUPER LABOUR.

WE hold that the only righteous and practical check on adult pauperism,—the only check at once just and efficient,—is the compulsory imposition of labour on every pauper to whom God has given, in even the slightest degree, the labouring ability. One grand cause of the inefficiency of workhouses arises mainly from the circumstance that their names do not indicate their character. The term workhouse has become a misnomer, seeing that it designates buildings in which, for any one useful purpose, no work is done. We say for any useful purpose; for in some cases there is work done in them which is of a most mischievous, pauper-producing kind. They enter, in the character of competitors, into that field of unskilled, or at least very partially skilled, labour, which is chiefly occupied by the self-sustaining classes that stand most directly on the verge of pauperism; and their hapless rivals, backed by no such bounty as that upon which *they* trade, sink in the ill-omened contest, and take refuge within their walls, to assist in carrying on that war against honest industry in which they themselves have gone down. Folly of this extreme character in the management of the pauperism of the country admits of no apology, from the circumstance that it is as palpable as it is mischievous. The legitimate employment of the inmates of a workhouse we find unmistakeably indicated by the nature of their wants. What is it that constitutes their pauperism? Nature has given them certain wants, which, from some defect either in character or person, they themselves fail to supply; they lack food and they lack raiment; and these two wants comprise the wants of a poor-house. Then, let the direct supply of these wants be the work of a poor-house,—its direct, not its circuitous