

Mr. *Wakley* thought that some explanation should be given as to the system of Poor-laws in Scotland.

The *Lord Advocate* would say a few words on the general question. There were Poor-laws existing throughout Scotland, but in many parishes it was not found necessary to put them into execution. They provided for every real pauper, but of course some check was necessary as to the distribution of relief. In England that check was found in the system of poor-houses; but this plan not being adopted in Scotland another was substituted in its place, and, accordingly, no relief whatever was given to able-bodied men. He could assure the House that that relief had not been found wanting in the grievous distress of the people of Paisley. A sum to the amount of ten thousand pounds had, in one form or another, been bestowed on the suffering poor of that place. It was a great and important question, whether a workhouse system was a better system; but into such a question the House could not now expect him to enter.

COPYRIGHT.] Mr. *Godson*, in rising to move for leave to bring in a bill for better securing the property in Copyright, said that, warned by the experience of the last two or three Sessions, he did not apply his bill to an extension of the duration of Copyright, but merely intended by it to secure the Copyright which existed by having it registered in the Court of Chancery, and having any assignments of the Copyright that might be afterwards made, and sums that might be raised upon it by way of mortgage, also registered, the property being thus made more secure, authors having the advantage of their own works, and the public the benefit of knowing in whom the Copyright existed if they wished to make a new edition of it, or to introduce it in a work of greater extent or invention. Of course, although he did not propose to extend the duration of Copyright, he did not wish to interfere with any gentleman who might think such a measure desirable. In a bill of this kind, which consisted principally of details, it was not necessary for him now to do more than ask leave to bring it in, leaving the details to be discussed at a future stage.

Mr. *Cochrane* hoped that the bill of the hon. Member would be proceeded with without delay. He was desirous that the

question of Copyright should be again debated, and if it were so, he should move, as an amendment to the present bill, that the term for the continuance of Copyright should be extended. Who could be more entitled to the consideration of the Legislature than the authors of the country.

Mr. *Wakley* trusted that no further restraint should be placed on the literature of the day. Good authors gained their fair reward, and bad ones received as much as they deserved.

Leave given. Bill brought in and read a first time.

THE MUNICIPAL REGULATIONS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.] The *Attorney-general* asked leave to bring in a bill to explain and amend the 5th and 6th Wm 4th, c. 76, the Municipal Regulation Act. There was a clause in the act which provided against any councillor or alderman remaining in office while, either by himself or by his partner, he had any interest in property held under lease from the corporation. Now this was the case to a great extent in Liverpool, Bridgewater, and many other corporate towns. He had called the attention of the late Government to this subject, and he had received an answer, to the effect that the then Attorney-general had no doubt that a literal construction could not be put upon the clause. The Court of Queen's Bench had, however, thought differently. They laid down as law that the property could not be held, and the office at the same time retained; and also, that the parties doing so would be subject to a penalty for every time they acted as councillors. From forty to 100 actions could now be brought under the operation of this clause, and, consequently the Legislature would be breaking faith with that part of the public who were interested in this question, unless they speedily set the matter at rest.

Mr. *Jervis* supported the measure. He presumed that it was merely a declaratory act to state what the Legislature had formerly intended, and not to remedy the defect which they had committed.

Leave given.

WRIT OF ERROR.] The *Attorney-general* also moved for leave to bring in a bill to allow of a writ of error in any case of a judgment of the Court of Queen's Bench,