

**THE VALLEY OF THE CALDER.** — “A West Riding Magistrate” writes to the *Times*:—“In the name of all that is sweet and healthy, let me ask you to raise your voice and urge our rulers to do something to save us in the Valley of the Calder from a sweeping pestilence. Years have elapsed since the River Pollution Commissioners gave such a report of this river as might have sufficed to arouse vigorous action in the most circumlocutory office. That letter, written to the Commissioners by the treasurer of the Chamber of Agriculture with its inky waters, surely appealed as touchingly as did any epistle written with the blood of its inditer. Alas! sir, all in vain. Not a single step has been taken to remedy in the slightest degree the evils which seriously threaten the whole community with such a visitation as appals one to think of should any choleraic symptoms appear among us. If Mr. Stansfeld or any of his colleagues question my description, let them for pity’s sake stand for 30 seconds on any bridge spanning the Calder, between Sowerby Bridge, near Halifax (the first large place on its banks), and its junction with the Aire at Castleford, 25 miles below. The famous bridge at Wakefield, where, against the buttress of one of its arches, stands the Chantry Chapel, although unique, I believe, in the kingdom, will not tempt the most ardent antiquarian to linger, unless proof against asphyxia. Within the last week, I have positively been made almost sick when driving fast across it. At Horbury Bridge, a fast increasing place, four miles higher, where the Wakefield and Huddersfield road crosses the river, the Navigation Canal Company have a weir, down which the putrid stream bubbles, and gives off an odour, not perhaps rivaling the varied character attributed to the Cologne sewage by Coleridge, for it is too overwhelming to analyse. At Dewsbury, close to the Market-place, another bridge affords a vantage-point, where thousands have to cross, and which, in this weather, must tend, more than the high price, to diminish the consumption of butcher’s meat. At Mirfield Bridge, again, above which the Huddersfield contribution of filthiness is received, another weir stirs up its horrors, and so, for fifteen miles higher up, it presents the same seething flow of putridity. And now, Sir, I assert (and I challenge contradiction) that half of this evil could be remedied by the mere act of common filtration of town sewage, and the stringent prevention of casting solids into the river. Will Mr. Stansfeld inform us why this much has not been done? Why can any scavenger at all times, without check, put his abomination into the river, the millowner his ashes, the dyer his solid dye wares, the sewer authorities their unfiltered pollutions? All this is done unchecked, and I repeat that these contribute one-half at least to the horrible result we now experience. I fully believe that a high standard of purity, approaching that published by Dr. Frankland, may eventually be arrived at; but though great difficulties present themselves to the accomplishment of this end, why not check what everyone condemns as inexcusable, viz., the injection of solid pollutions? That it is hopeless to look to the local authorities for a remedy, if left to themselves, all past experience proves. If a complaint is made to the Government nothing is done beyond the issuing of a report by the Inspector sent down from Whitehall to inquire into the allegations. I am certain those gentlemen will allow that, where complaints have been made in this watershed of neglect of duty by the local authorities, their inquiries have amply substantiated the grounds of complaint. On the other hand, I have been frequently told by members of Local Boards that no systematic action will ever be pursued for the abatement of nuisances connected with the trade of the district without independent and regular inspection. Surely, where the public health so urgently demands it, we are entitled to expect from the supreme authority something more than an empty form of inquiry. No trade would be injured by checking these glaring evils, and scarcely any expense would be incurred. But, to ensure the result, systematic inspection is indispensable.”