

both of two expedients, the assessments must be increased, or the number of poor must be curtailed. I think both of these means ought to receive attention. Irish families, and other strangers who have no obvious resources for their support, ought to be prevented from settling in Ayr, by the rigid enforcement of an efficient law of settlement. In this way the number of the poor might be reduced so far that an increase of the assessment in Newton and Wallace-town, not greater than the community could bear, might afford the desired relief, whilst the resources of the parish of Ayr are already amply sufficient for those poor people whom it would then have to provide for. But unless Ayr receives some security against the introduction of destitute strangers, and such as are about to become destitute, the disadvantages of situation, from its accessibility to the Irish, are such that it will never cease to be kept at the lowest stage of poverty, and the augmentation of its charitable funds will only have the effect of increasing the numbers of the poor. With regard to the industrious poor, the hand-loom weavers ought to be discouraged from bringing up their children at the loom, now that the extensive introduction of machinery has reduced the trade to its lowest ebb. It is the poverty of the parents that obliges them to employ their sons in weaving, as early as their strength is sufficient for the work, and the practice cannot easily be checked, without either improving the circumstances of the parents, or giving the children some other profitable employment. It is, however, much to be lamented, for lasting poverty is thus entailed upon a new generation, for the sake of a temporary relief, and that of small amount.

A fever hospital is much wanted in Ayr. It is unnecessary for me to give reasons for a statement the truth of which is self evident; but I may add one reason to those which are derived from the advantages such an institution would confer, both on the poor themselves and on the community at large—viz. justice to the dispensary surgeons, who are constantly exposing their lives to hazard by visiting the infected hovels of their fever patients. I believe each of the present dispensary surgeons has caught fever in his labours of charity, and one very talented young gentleman lost his life from this cause not many years ago. It would not cost the public more money to have the patients promptly removed to a fever hospital, and treated there apart from their families, than it pays at present in consequence of the increased extension of the disease, and the necessity of the healthy members of a family devoting their time to attendance on the sick. The only difference is, that at present the funds are obtained principally from private charity of which no record is kept, whereas the hospital would require regular contributions methodically managed by a responsible body.

Ayr, February 16th, 1841.

JAMES SYM, M.D.

No. 12.

ON THE SANITARY CONDITION AND GENERAL ECONOMY OF THE TOWN AND NEIGHBOURHOOD OF LANARK.

BY JOHN GIBSON, ESQ., Surgeon.

GENTLEMEN,—I have, to the utmost of my ability, complied with your request in furnishing a Report as to the sanitary condition of the town and neighbourhood of Lanark, where I have resided for nearly 30 years, and I trust the following details will meet with your approval, and facilitate the important object which you have in view.

The parish of Lanark is bounded on the south and west by the River Clyde, on the east by the parish of Carstairs, and on the north by the parish of Carluke.

At the last census the population of the town was about 4500, and the town and parish nearly 8000.

The town of Lanark stands on a very elevated situation on the banks of the Clyde, about half a mile from the river on the north side. On the south side of the town, the ground declines toward the river, some places falling in gentle slopes, and some in steep declivities. The town is about 670 feet above the level of the sea, distant from Edinburgh 32 miles, from Glasgow 25, and from Stirling, 35.

Lanark, on account of the dry and elevated situation of the town, is celebrated as a remarkably healthy locality, and is very seldom visited by epidemical disease.

Fever sometimes visits the town and parish; the malady is usually confined to the working classes, but seldom prevails to an alarming extent. The localities where it makes its chief ravages are narrow courts, back lanes, and the houses of the poor, where provisions are scanty, and little attention is paid to ventilation and cleanliness.

This infectious disease is generally introduced by vagrants and beggars, and spreads in all directions among the inhabitants of these dirty and ill-ventilated houses, and many of the inmates fall victims to the malady; and the want of food, clothing, fuel and cleanliness, are the chief causes of the fatality of the disease.

I have often entreated the magistrates to interfere on behalf of these unfortunate creatures, but in vain; they always seem to consider every shilling spent upon necessaries for the poor as money thrown away; even money subscribed for the relief of poor families, and placed in the hands of the magistrates, is dealt out to the afflicted in gills and half gills of wine, because in this way it affords a greater profit to the bailie than if given in the larger quantity of a bottle at a time. The same conduct is observed in regard to

all cordials and necessaries doled out by the bailies to the afflicted poor.

As the town of Lanark stands high, and most of the streets have a sloping direction, no offensive matter is allowed to accumulate, and no nuisance is permitted to remain on any of the public thoroughfares. A large common sewer runs under ground through the principal street, carries away the filth, and contributes much to keep the streets clean and dry. In many instances, in back courts and narrow lanes, dunghills are collected near the doors of the houses, and the entrance through the court and into the dwellings is seldom or rather never cleaned; these nuisances in hot weather must be very injurious to health.

The town is lighted with gas, although, from the scanty revenue of the burgh, the lights are far between, and in many places they merely serve the purpose of rendering the darkness visible.

The town is tolerably supplied with wells, but from the elevated site of the town it is difficult to bring in the requisite supply of water; and in seasons of long drought the deficiency is severely felt, and many are obliged to go to a distance from the town to procure water from a perennial spring, situated down on the bank of the river.

The great proportion of the population of Lanark are wholly supported by hand-loom weaving: this is the only business carried on to any extent in the town; above 900 individuals are employed in this branch of labour within the parish. This trade is at a very low pass, and can scarcely yield the means of subsistence to those who are employed in it. A weaver, in the prime of life, and possessing superior skill in his trade, cannot earn above 7s. or 8s. per week, to gain which he must work 14 or 16 hours per day, which must be eventually ruinous to the most vigorous constitution. The common wages scarcely average 6s. per week, and I know some old men who cannot earn more than 2s. 6d. and 3s. per week; from which sums must be deducted the loss of time at the end of every web, before they can be prepared to commence with a new one, the loom-rent, light, &c. The only addition to this miserable pittance is what the weaver's wife can earn when she is capable of winding the waft upon pirns, and her earnings vary from 6d. to 1s. 3d. per week.

Great must be the misery and privation of those who have a family of children to support upon such incomes, and there are many such in this town and neighbourhood; and yet the great body of them are well-behaved and intelligent men, who bear their hardships with commendable patience.

The great majority of the working-classes in the town of Lanark have only one apartment as the residence of the whole family, and must serve as sitting, eating and sleeping-room.

There are instances in which families have two apartments, and where great attention is paid to neatness, cleanness, and comfort;

but there are comparatively few so well accommodated. The majority have but one room, and little attention is paid to cleanliness or comfort; the furniture, which is both mean and scanty, consisting of the bare necessaries, is seldom cleaned, and bears all the marks of both long and rough service.

Many houses are covered with slate roofs, and are sufficiently defended against the elements; others are covered with thatch, and the rain often finds ready access, while the doors and windows are so open as to supersede the exertions of the family to ventilate the apartment.

In most cases the floors are nothing but the bare earth, hardened by the constant treading of the inmates; there are other cases in which floors are formed by beating earth and lime together, which, when dried, becomes solid enough to resist impression. A few are paved with stone.

Several houses are situated in confined localities, in back lanes, and narrow courts consisting of several stories, and each room, from the ground to the top flat, is occupied by a whole family; these are often abodes of poverty, and all its usual accompaniments. I know of no cases in which pigs are inmates of a family, nor do I suppose there is an instance of it to be met with in the town; and I think I can venture to say, upon the whole, that the squalid wretchedness which is to be met with in the dwellings of the poor, in other parts of Scotland, is not to be found in the town of Lanark to anything like the same extent.

There are very few country towns where the poor have so many sources of aid, arising from charitable funds, as in the town of Lanark. There is the Female Society for the relief of the sick, aged, and indigent females: it is supported by subscriptions, and its funds amount to about 40*l.* annually. The society is composed of a number of respectable females in the town, and has proved of signal benefit in supplying pecuniary relief, coals, and clothing to poor females. The society is well conducted, and the objects of its charity are carefully selected.

There is the general poor's fund of the parish, consisting of the moneys collected at the doors of the parish church on sabbath, which amounts to about 30*l.* per annum, or upwards. To this is added an assessment laid upon all the property possessed by each family, whether moveable or heritable, at the rate of twopence per pound; this assessment amounts to about 200*l.* annually.

This tax is laid on by fifteen men, who are chosen annually by the magistrates, and who assess the householders of the town according to the information they can obtain as to the actual property possessed by each family. The number of paupers supplied from this fund is usually about 60, and the supplies allowed are from 6d. to 2s. 6d. per week. These funds are managed and distributed by the Kirk session, and heritors of the parish.

There is, besides, a fund, amounting to 70*l.* per annum, dis-

tributed among the poor of the burgh by the magistrates. This sum arises from the rental of what is called the Hospital Lands.

There is also the Wilson fund, amounting to 32*l.* per annum, for the aid of indigent persons not upon the poor's roll, and bearing respectable moral characters, which is given out in annuities from 1*l.* to 3*l.* each.

This fund was left by a Mrs. Wilson, late of Bathgate, a native of Lanark; and the same benevolent lady endowed a free-school in the town for the instruction of 50 poor children. She also erected a commodious school-room, a dwelling-house and 50*l.* of annual salary for the teacher, while the school-books as well as the education are all free: over this fund and school the magistrates, the clergymen of the town, the rector of the grammar-school, with one or two others, are appointed trustees.

There is another charity called the Hyndford Mortification, consisting of 24*l.* per annum, left by the late Mr. Howison, proprietor of Hyndford. This fund is placed under the trust of the above-mentioned gentlemen, who meet once a-year to receive applications for aid, and to distribute said fund according to the claims of the applicants, who are to be, according to the letter of the deed, "the godly industrious poor who are receiving supplies from no other charity."

Two-thirds of this sum is, by the donor's will, to be distributed among the poor of the burgh of Lanark, and the other third among those of the landward part of the parish.

A mile from the town, and immediately on the bank of the Clyde, is the village of New Lanark, containing a population of nearly 2000, all of whom are connected with the cotton factory, erected there about 50 years ago, by Mr. David Dale, of Glasgow, and lately in the possession of Mr. Robert Owen, but now possessed by Walker and Company.

In this village fever and other infectious diseases prevail more than in the town of Lanark: this may probably arise from the low situation of the village, which stands at the bottom of a deep valley, on the margin of the river, enclosed by high grounds which conceal it from the traveller till he is close upon it, when all at once it bursts upon his view, presenting a romantic scene of extensive and handsome buildings, and of lively activity where nothing was expected but stillness and solitude; as also from the great number of families residing in the same building, from their daily confinement in the factory, and their constant and unavoidable intercourse with each other.

It is seldom, however, considering all these circumstances, visited with epidemical disease to any considerable extent; and there are few factory villages in the kingdom where the working classes enjoy so great a degree of health and comfort. This may be accounted for from their vicinity to the river, and the great attention paid to cleanliness, both as it respects their persons and houses.

Individuals, I understand, are employed by the overseer to inspect the houses every week, and to mark those which are cleanest kept, and at the end of the season, a small premium is awarded to the first, second, and third families, whose dwellings are marked as having been kept cleanest throughout the year. This is a great stimulus to cleanliness, and in a high degree conducive to the health of the villagers.

The company keep a store in the village for supplying the workers with provisions and clothing, and the utmost care is taken to have all the provisions of the very best quality.

A surgeon is provided to attend the village, and all the medicine ordered by him, as well as medical attendance, are free. The company also supply excellent schools for the young, where all the necessary, and some of the ornamental, branches of education are taught at a very trifling expense.

The wages at New Lanark are not nearly so high as in the other factories of Scotland, but the works are steady, and the people have many advantages which are not enjoyed, so far as I know, by any other class of labourers.

There is a friendly sick society in New Lanark, towards which each worker contributes a small sum monthly: the company usually allows 50*l.*, and sometimes more, yearly, to help the fund. The rates at which the sick are supplied are as follows:—When sick, 7*s.* 6*d.*; when recovering, 5*s.*; and superannuated, 3*s.* per week. There are, besides, three funeral societies in the parish of Lanark, two in New Lanark, and one in Lanark. On the death of a member or his wife, the family receives 4*l.*, and 2*l.* on the death of a child.

In the village of New Lanark the circumstances of the whole population are nearly on a level. There are none wealthy among them, and there are none who can be properly called paupers; although there are a few individuals in the village who are upon the poor's roll of the parish; but I believe these were all enrolled on the parochial poor's list previous to their residence in New Lanark.

One mile west from the town of Lanark lies the village of Kirkfieldbank, in the parish of Lesmahagow, situated on the low ground along the margin of the Clyde. The village consists chiefly of two ranges of houses, one on the south and the other on the north side of the toll-road from Lanark to Glasgow; the population may be from 800 to 1000.

Nearly adjoining is another range of houses on the south side of the same road, called Dublin, in the common phrase of the neighbourhood, on account of the great number of Irish families resident there; and close upon this row of houses is the village of Linville, consisting of a long range of straggling cottages, stretching along the south side of the Glasgow road. These villages may be considered as a continuation of Kirkfieldbank; and the

whole group may contain from 1200 to 1500 inhabitants, and weaving is their sole employment.

The situation of these tenements is very healthy, on account of their proximity to the river, which flows in view of each dwelling, and in many cases within a few yards of the doors.

In Kirkfieldbank and Linville the houses are kept free of nuisance, although all within is on a very mean scale, and little attention is paid to neatness or comfort.

In the row called Dublin, the houses have a meaner appearance; and from the broken-down state of both windows and doors, both wind and rain must obtain ready access. The internal economy of these cottages is of the poorest and the dirtiest kind to be met with in this neighbourhood. No family possesses more than one small apartment, where all ages and all sexes are huddled together by night and by day. The floors are the common earth on which the cottages are built, just in the state in which it was enclosed. Both the floors and walls of the houses are usually very damp, as no means are employed to carry off the water which falls from the rising ground behind, and finds its way to the foundations of the houses. The inhabitants of this row in general bear the appearance of great poverty, but I believe that a great proportion of their destitution arises from their improvidence and irregular habits.

In the village of Linville, the houses are, on the whole, more comfortable, and the people do not exhibit the same appearances of poverty.

The whole of this range of villages is very healthy, and is seldom visited by febrile disease.

This is no doubt owing to the detached situation of the houses, being mostly of one story, and exposed to the air in all directions, as well as to the flowing of the Clyde in their immediate vicinity.

Two miles further down the Clyde, on the south side of the river, and on both sides of the Glasgow road, stands the village of Hazlebank, containing a population, I should suppose, of 200, all of whom are weavers and miners.

The village has the appearance of poverty, and many of the houses seem to be falling into decay; and the remarks which I have made respecting the range of cottages commonly called Dublin are applicable here.

One mile below Hazlebank, on the same side of the Clyde, is the village of Crossford, containing 200 or 300 of a population. It lies on level ground, straggling, without any order, along the plain through which the Clyde here flows.

The villagers are mostly weavers, but there are interspersed among them a number of small proprietors and farmers, with a few other tradesmen, such as joiners, shoemakers, &c. There are also a considerable number of miners.

This locality is peculiarly healthy, and it is common for several

genteel families to repair to it in summer to recruit their health, in place of going to the sea-side. I have seldom known of febrile diseases prevailing in that locality. The village lies in the parish of Lesmahagow, and there are a few aged and infirm persons who receive a scanty allowance from the parochial funds; but the great body of the people are in circumstances of comparative comfort, according to their rank in society.

Nemphlar is a village on the north side of the Clyde, three miles from the town of Lanark; but in place of lying on the low grounds along the bank of the river, as those villages do which I have already described, it occupies a position nearly as elevated as the town of Lanark, stretching along the high grounds which rise to a considerable elevation above the river, the land sloping down from the village to the edge of the water in a southerly direction. This is a continuation of straggling houses, placed in all directions for about two miles along the high grounds, and the population may probably amount to between 300 or 400.

The majority of the inhabitants are weavers, but there are interspersed among them a considerable number of small proprietors and farmers. The proprietors possess from sixty to upwards of a hundred acres of land each. These families are all tolerably supplied with the necessaries of life; and I know of none among them who are abjectly poor.

The village of Cartland, in the parish of Lanark, lies about three miles from the town, and two miles north of Nemphlar: it contains about 200 or 300 inhabitants.

The village of Kilkadzow lies about two miles further to the north than Cartland, within the parish of Carluke: the population may be between 200 or 300. Both of these villages contain a mixed kind of population, such as Nemphlar, consisting of weavers chiefly, with some small farmers and proprietors and miners.

The weavers in all these small villages are more comfortable, because more sober and economical, than those who reside in more populous localities.

These villages are generally very healthy; epidemical diseases are seldom known among them. The few paupers to be found among them are usually weavers, who have become unable to labour through age and infirmity.

The dwellings of these localities are usually of a very homely description, but they are dry within; and though mean and ill furnished, one seldom meets with any nuisance in them, or the appearance of destitution. The small farmers and proprietors, among whom the poor weavers reside, are sometimes mindful of them in cases of extreme hardship, occasionally affording them some small supplies of milk, oatmeal, potatoes, &c.

The few paupers to be met with in these districts receive from 6*d.* to 1*s.* 6*d.* per week from the parochial funds of the respective parishes to which they belong.

There are a number of other small villages scattered over this

district, but it would serve no purpose to specify any others, as the details I have now given will be found applicable to them all, with little or no variation.

The agricultural population of this district differ very little in their style of life from the villagers, the farms being usually on a small scale, and there is little distinction discernible between master and servant.

The farm-houses are usually of one story, covered with thatch, and contain two apartments. The dwelling-house, cow-house, stable, and barn usually form one row of humble tenements attached to the end of each other. The family residence differs very little from the dwellings of the labouring classes, in respect of furniture or internal neatness. The kitchen is the more comfortable of the two apartments of which the dwelling usually consists, as it is more occupied, and has the advantage of a constant fire. The whole family convene here,—parents, children, and servants all sitting, eating, conversing, as well as labouring together without distinction.

The other apartment is seldom used but as a bed-room, and is in general very ill aired, cold, and damp, having an earthen floor, which is seldom dry.

There are few instances in which servants or hinds have separate establishments for themselves; and when any of the male servants happen to be married persons, their families are left to accommodate themselves where they find convenient.

These are a very healthy and robust race of people, and infectious diseases are scarcely ever known among them; they are cleaner in their habits, and more correct in their morals, than the villagers.

A great proportion of the working classes in this district are sober and industrious people, correct in their habits, and civil in their manners, and many of them are regular in their attendance upon Divine ordinances.

There are seven places of worship within the parish of Lanark; and the great body of the people who attend these churches are of the labouring classes.

In this district there are ample means for the instruction of youth, as schools are to be met with in all directions, and many of them conducted on the most approved plans, and a great many young people are in the habit of receiving instruction in the common, and some in the more ornamental, branches of knowledge. The country part of the population are very attentive in the observance of the ordinances of religion on the sabbath, and in keeping their children at school.

But while I make these favourable statements regarding the general character of the district, I am sorry to say that there are very many grievous exceptions.

A number of the lower orders, both in the town of Lanark and in all the neighbouring villages, are grossly ignorant and immoral;

these desecrate the sabbath, employing it as a day of amusement and dissipation. They never attend any place of worship,—treat with scorn all attempts made for their moral reformation: such persons cannot be persuaded to send their offspring either to week, day, or sabbath-schools, although abundant instructions, of both kinds, are offered them free of all expense. It is chiefly among these ignorant and careless people that profligacy prevails, and is followed by its usual attendants, poverty and disease. (Most of this class of people are Chartists, who are constantly declaiming against the extravagance of the government, and all who possess more property than themselves.)

When any of this class can procure the means of obtaining spirits, they are in the habit of grouping in some low tippling house, or in one of their own dwellings, and continue drinking so long as they can procure a fresh supply of whiskey: these meetings often end in a noisy scuffle, and lead to an investigation before the magistrates.

These scenes take place among the very lowest grades of society, and the vagrants, who lodge in beggaries during the night.

There are a number of loose girls in the town and neighbourhood of Lanark; and infanticide is by no means uncommon, although frequently managed so as to elude detection.

There are many petty thefts committed, and sometimes personal injuries received in drunken quarrels, which are usually brought before the magistrates in the Burgh Court, or before the sheriff, who holds a court in the town once a-week. There are occasional instances of more serious offences which require to be referred to the assizes in Glasgow; but these cases are so rare as scarcely to bear any assignable proportion to the sober and inoffensive part of the population.

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### No. 13.

#### REPORT ON THE GENERAL AND SANITARY CONDITION OF THE TOWN OF GREENOCK.

BY W. L. LAURIE, M.D.

GENTLEMEN,—It may not be deemed out of place to give a brief description of the topography, climate, &c. of this town, previous to entering upon the few facts which are to follow regarding its sanitary condition.

Greenock is situated on the banks of the river Clyde, about 20 miles lower down the river than Glasgow: the ground on which the town is built rises by a gradual ascent from the river side, it soon becomes more abrupt, and ascends to the height of about 600 feet; the great proportion of the town is built at the base of this declivity close to the river side. The soil on which the lower