

which he has no objections should be made public as on his authority.

“Inverness is a nice town, situated in a most beautiful country, and with every facility for cleanliness and comfort. The people are, generally speaking, a nice people, but their sufferance of nastiness is past endurance. Contagious fever is seldom or ever absent; but for many years it has seldom been rife in its pestiferous influence. The people owe this more to the kindness of Almighty God than to any means taken or observed for its prevention. There are very few houses in town which can boast of either water-closet or privy; and only two or three public privies in the better part of the place exist for the great bulk of the inhabitants. Hence there is not a street, lane, or approach to it that is not disgustingly defiled at all times, so much so as to render the whole place an absolute nuisance. The *midden* is the chief object of the humble; and though enough of water for purposes of cleanliness may be had by little trouble, still the ablutions are seldom—muck in doors and out of doors *must* be their portion. When cholera prevailed in Inverness, it was more fatal than in almost any other town of its population in Britain.

(Signed) “JOHN INGLIS NICOL, M.D.”

The information supplied by the other two medical gentlemen will be found, with their names attached, in the answers to the different queries.

It is only further necessary to add that the NORTHERN INFIRMARY at Inverness (as it is called) is an excellent and well-conducted establishment for the sick poor, but not exclusively for those of the town, as it is the only infirmary in the whole northern counties of Nairn, Inverness, Ross, Sutherland, and Caithness. Upwards of 300 patients pass through it annually, and formerly the managers relieved nearly as many *out-door* patients in the town of Inverness; but the number of such is now reduced to about 120 since the establishment, in 1832, of the Town's Dispensary for the sick poor, which affords a great deal of gratuitous professional attendance and medicines *at their own houses*, the number of patients under the charge of the dispensary for the year ending 31st December, 1840, being 418, the number of visits to them at their dwellings 980, and those treated at the dispensary being 226.

A sketch or ground-plan of the town accompanies this Report, with the view of showing the positions of the suburbs, and of the localities where the poor are most densely congregated, and which are coloured red.

Humbly reported by,
G. ANDERSON.

Inverness, 2nd March, 1841.

To
The Poor Law Commissioners.

No. 18.

REPORT ON THE SANITARY CONDITION AND GENERAL ECONOMY
OF THE TOWN OF TAIN AND THE DISTRICT OF EASTER ROSS,
MADE TO THE POOR LAW COMMISSIONERS.

By JAMES CAMERON, Esq., *Surgeon*, Tain.

GENTLEMEN,—In compliance with your request, I propose in the following pages to give a Report, which I trust will be found faithful and correct, respecting the sanitary condition and the general economy of the labouring population of the town of Tain, and of the several parishes that compose the district of Easter Ross.

The county of Ross is situated within lat. $57^{\circ} 8'$ and $58^{\circ} 10'$ north, and between long. 4° and $5^{\circ} 46'$ west. Its extreme length is 85 miles; it comprises 2434 square miles, exclusive of the island of Lewis; it is bounded on the south by Inverness-shire, on the north by Sutherland and the Dornoch Frith, on the east by the Moray Frith, on the west by the Western or Atlantic Ocean.

Its surface is much diversified: the lowest point is about the level of the sea; the loftiest point is Ben Wyvis, about the middle of the county, the height of which is 3720 feet above the level of the sea. In Easter Ross the highest point is the Hill of Strui, in the parish of Edderton, 1041 feet above the sea-level. The western division is mountainous and deeply indented with glens and lochs. The form of the eastern division is that of a plain promontory, terminating in a low rocky headland called Tarbat Ness, or Tarbat Point, and its surface on the west is hilly, and toward the east slightly undulating. This district, to which I now limit my observations, contains no navigable river or piece of fresh water of any considerable size. The streams are torrents, brooks, or artificial drains; with the exception of Lochslin, the lakelets are what are commonly called mill-dams; and, in consequence of recent drainage, there are few stagnant pools that deserve particular notice. The prevalent rocks along the southern coast, the outlines of which are singularly rough and bold, are red sandstone and limestone; the northern coast is bounded by stripes of white sand and sand-hills, covered here and there with bent, stunted heath, and the sea-daisy. The soil is various: in the low lands it generally consists of clay and loam; in the undulant parts of *detritus*, or a mixture of red and black sand; and, in the higher declivities, of a mixture of vegetable matter and small siliceous stones. The climate is very variable: about one-fifth less rain falls in Easter than in Wester Ross. The quantity of rain which fell at Tarbat Ness Lighthouse during 1840, as indicated by the weather-gauge, is 20.94 inches. The average

quantity of rain which falls in Scotland appears to be about 31 inches; and the average quantity for Easter Ross is about 23 inches. The most prevalent winds seem to be the westerly and south-easterly. A damp and cold east wind generally prevails in the months of May and June; fogs, proceeding from the east, are most frequent during the end of autumn and the beginning of spring; thunder-storms and showers of hail are unfrequent; the air is pure, bracing, and salubrious; the water is generally excellent, especially in the vicinity of the different declivities, where springs of the purest water abound, some of which are highly chalybeate. In those flat places commonly called *lōns* the water is less pure, though generally reckoned wholesome. There is no mineral-work apart from quarrying and tile-making recently introduced, though a stratum of coal was long ago discovered at Portandruì, in the parish of Nigg.

The labouring inhabitants are of Celtic origin, with comparatively little intermixture, and, with the exception of a few artisans and shopkeepers, they are all employed in field-work or in fishing. There are seven villages inhabited by fishermen.

The common food of the inhabitants is chiefly vegetable, consisting of potatoes, oatmeal porridge and cakes, and brose. The labouring classes seldom taste flesh or fowl, except on particular occasions, such as weddings, christenings, and funeral dinners, and on New-year's Day, which is their only holiday. In general they are able occasionally to buy fish, which is both plentiful and cheap,—salt herrings and dried fish in winter, and cod and haddock during the summer season. The poorest class are obliged, in seasons of scarcity, to draw their subsistence from shell-fish, such as crabs (partans), limpets, periwinkles, cockles, mussels; and from sea-weed, such as the *Fucus palmatus* (in Gaelic, *duiliag*), the *Fucus esculentus*, and the *Fucus pinnatifidus* (*pepper dulse*). Some of these, indeed, appear at the tables of the rich, and are considered *delicacies*. The potato is unquestionably the chief article of diet, and may well be styled "the staff of life" in this district. The people are almost wholly engaged in its cultivation during the months of April and May; and there is probably no part of the United Kingdom that produces potatoes more grateful to the taste or of a more nutritious quality. Tea and coffee are the principal luxuries, though they are now, fortunately, become so common as hardly to deserve that name. Among the men the habit of snuff-taking is almost universal, and of those who do not take snuff the most part smoke, the tobacco-pipe having come more into use since the visitation of cholera.

The agricultural inhabitants clothe themselves in corduroys, and the fishers in woollen stuffs; and in general they are both decently and warmly clad. Cleanliness is not their characteristic virtue, but unquestionably it is becoming more common

among them, and they are rapidly acquiring habits of neatness, order, and taste, with respect to both their persons and dwellings. Dunghills and cesspools are now but seldom seen about the fronts of their cottages, and cattle have ceased to find shelter under their master's roof. With respect to their houses the chief defect seems to be a want of ventilation. The windows, which are often composed wholly of wood, are far too small, and are far too seldom left open; and I need hardly add that the want of a free circulation of air, besides predisposing to disease, is most prejudicial to invalids, and especially to the bedridden. The want of a neat and well-ordered garden is also a glaring defect about cottages in this district; and I am convinced that proprietors could scarcely do their cotters a greater service, with respect to their health and morals, than by encouraging among them a taste for horticulture, both culinary and ornamental. Among the working population the period of daily labour extends from 5 o'clock A.M. to 6 o'clock P.M., with the intervals of an hour for breakfast and an hour for dinner. The only regular holiday throughout the year is New Year's Day, O.S. Among adults amusements or games of every kind have almost disappeared; and now their only recreation, if such it may be called, seems to be absolute cessation from labour. Doubtless they have of late greatly improved as to enterprise and habits of steady industry; but while they have lost much of that laziness and waywardness imputed to the unmodified highlander, I fear they have lost also much of his free and serenely joyous spirit. It should be remembered, however, that they are at present in a state of transition, which, when complete, will elevate them in the scale of civilization, and may render their condition happier and more secure.

The state of education in this district is lamentably low: the schools seem to require a more searching and vigilant superintendence, and the system, generally, is far in the rear of modern improvement. The circumstance that Gaelic is the vernacular, and that the business of tuition is conducted wholly in English, presents a formidable obstacle; yet far too little is done, or attempted, towards obviating it. During the summer months especially the schools are thinly and irregularly attended, and no well-devised attempt has been made to promote the secular instruction of adults. Throughout the district there is no Mechanics' Institute, School of Arts, or similar institution; and I know of only one library designed for the poorer classes, namely, that connected with the Secession-Church in Nigg.

The moral statistics of this district are reckoned very creditable to its inhabitants: the principal immoralities appear to be *petty theft* and *lying*. Valuables are very seldom stolen; and with respect to the latter vice, it seems very often to originate from an imperfect understanding of English, and a love of what is novel

and marvellous. A habit of whiskey-drinking, once so common, is now happily become rarer, in consequence of the vigilance of the magistracy in discountenancing and putting down low "change-houses." Conspicuous crimes are almost wholly unknown; travelling is perfectly secure; the inhabitants use no particular precaution against nightly depredation, and hospitality has lost few of its ancient honours.

The labouring classes are generally a healthy people, well formed, robust, and active. Much of the mortality among them is attributable, besides the ordinary causes, to want of seasonable medical aid, and to improper and empirical modes of treatment.

Their bearing is independent; their manners are simple and naturally polite; they have a proper sense of personal dignity; they are keenly alive to either injury or kindness; and they are lastingly grateful for sympathy and attention.

Having made these brief preliminary remarks, I now descend to details, reserving for the conclusion of my report such reflections and suggestions as may seem to me most worthy of consideration.

Easter Ross consists of nine parishes, viz.: Tain, Tarbat, Fearn, Nigg, Loggie Easter, Kilmuir Easter, Rosskeen, Edderton, and Kincardine.

The parish of Tain is bounded on the east by the parishes of Tarbat and Fearn, on the west by the parish of Edderton, on the south by Loggie Easter, and on the north by the Dornoch Frith. Its greatest breadth is four and a half, and its length ten, miles. A great proportion of the parish consists of a large tract of sand, called the "Fendom," lying along the Dornoch Frith for a distance of six miles, wholly unfit for any purpose except for the grazing of a few sheep. There is also in the parish a considerable proportion of peat-moss and hill-land uncultivated; the rest consists of arable land and wood. Altogether the parish of Tain is not so fertile in corn as the surrounding neighbourhood; the valued rental of the parish is 3650*l.*, exclusively of the revenue of the town. There are no minerals dug in this parish. The royal borough of Tain is situated on the south side of the Dornoch Frith, being distant from it about a quarter of a mile. From the hill of Tain, the altitude of which is 780 feet above the level of the sea, and which lies about two miles to the west, there is a gradual but distinctly perceptible slope. On the edge of this slope stands the town, which commands a magnificent view, embracing the lofty and many-shaped range of the Sutherland mountains, the sandy Firth of Dornoch, and a wide extent of sand and heath, bounded by the western outline of the German Sea. The population of the parish of Tain, according to the recent census, is 3158: of this number 2176 belonged to the town, and the remainder to the country. The population of the parish consists principally of those employed in agricultural pursuits, of tradesmen, shop-

keepers, and fishermen. There is only one village in the parish, viz., the fishing-village of Inver.

The town of Tain has been lately lighted with gas, which has also been introduced into almost all the respectable houses. The town is but indifferently supplied with water, from draw-wells and a few springs. That procured from the springs, which are rare, is of excellent quality; but that from the draw-wells is inferior.

There are two or three covered sewers; but these are not sufficient for keeping the town clear of impurities. There is a piece of drain here and there, but very inefficient; and it frequently happens, during a heavy fall of rain, that the streets and roads are covered, and many of the houses inundated. There are three courses of water that run through the town. In summer they are scantily supplied; but in winter they are sometimes converted into torrents. They are in a great measure undefended, and in some places overflow their banks after heavy rain. The courses are not kept clear, and, in consequence, filth proceeding both from animal and vegetable matter is allowed to remain in them. By proper management these courses would prove very beneficial to the town; and at a moderate expense might be made to assume a different aspect, tending to beautify the town. The streets and lanes are very irregularly placed; and, with the exception of a portion of the main street, they are all unpaved.

In front of the houses of the poorer classes the channels of the streets and roads are not kept open, water being allowed to remain in a stagnant state, and all sorts of refuse being thrown into these channels, and collected there in heaps, in order to form dunghills. There are numerous houses in a decayed and useless state, which are converted into reservoirs for all sorts of filth. There are various causes which render the collecting of manure profitable to the inhabitants: their food principally consisting of potatoes, of which vegetable they raise large quantities, it requires all their ingenuity throughout the year to collect a sufficient supply towards a succeeding crop; and the farmers in the neighbourhood are in the habit of purchasing cart-loads from them, for which they pay from 1*s.* 6*d.* to 2*s.* 6*d.* per load. Thus the greatest pains are taken by the inhabitants to procure and collect impurities of all descriptions; such as ashes, dirty water, decayed and decomposed matter, &c.: and this mass is husbanded with the greatest care and attention, and lies at their doors during most part of the year. There are in many instances stagnant pools about the houses, into which the refuse is thrown to keep it in a moist state. These collections of water proceed from various sources, viz. from dirty water and other impurities thrown from the houses, from rain-water, which has no means of being carried off, and in some places from water trickling through the soil. They render the houses damp, and emit most offensive and unwholesome effluvia.

The practice of keeping pigs is very common in Tain, particularly among the poor and working classes. From the limited accommodation possessed by this class, the pigsties must of necessity be near the houses; in general they are placed behind them; in many cases they are attached to them, and in the immediate vicinity of the back doors and windows. Others, again, are placed immediately in front.

During the last three years the town has increased in size, and on the main street and other parts a number of elegant dwelling-houses and places of business have been erected, which have imparted to the town an aspect superior to that of most burghs of its size and population. The County-house was unfortunately consumed by fire some years ago, when three persons were burnt to death. The present gaol is narrow in its accommodation, and anything but a wholesome place. A new gaol is, I understand, about to be erected. The principal street and a few others are wide and airy; but the back streets and lanes are narrow and ill kept.

There are in Tain several families in good circumstances; and, indeed, a considerable proportion of the population consists of respectable individuals in the middle rank of life. No landed proprietor lives in the town. There are no regular policemen; the only persons acting as such are the town-officers, two in number.

There is only one scavenger, or street-cleaner, for the whole town, and this individual is an old and infirm man, wholly incapable of performing the duties of the situation. There is in the town an excellent academy, and three well-conducted schools. The inhabitants seem very desirous of giving their children all the education their means will admit: from the moderate fees required, they are enabled to give their children a good plain education, and even the rudiments of a classical one.

The houses of the labouring classes are thatched with straw, and are seldom water-tight. They generally consist of two apartments; namely, two rooms on the ground floor, or one room on the ground floor and an attic. Those of the poorest class consist only of one apartment. Almost all these houses have floors composed of clay, or of a mixture of earth and clay, and are damp, among other causes, from the very defective drainage, and the heaps of refuse with which they are almost always surrounded. Though there is generally a sufficient declivity to carry away the filth and water, little or no advantage is taken of this circumstance. A conspicuous want of cleanliness prevails among the poor, and even among those who are in general somewhat above that rank. The houses are not well constructed with respect to ventilation. In instances not a few, the chimneys being ill framed, the houses are subject to smoke, and are consequently filthy. In order to obtain a desirable degree of *warmth*, every opening by which the external air might be admitted is carefully closed up. From the want of a proper provision for that purpose, the streets are very often

dirty, the mud and filth being in many places ankle-deep. With very few exceptions, the gutters or channels run close to the houses. If the streets were sufficiently repaired and paved, and proper sewers constructed, the services of scavengers would be less required, in consequence of the natural declivities of the locality, of which at present little or no advantage is taken. Of late considerable improvements have been effected by the authorities, perhaps as many as could be expected from the low state of the burgh finances.

There are three lodging-houses in Tain, which are chiefly occupied by beggars and hawkers. These places are kept in the filthiest condition imaginable; I have been credibly informed that the bedclothes used in one of these houses have not been washed for the last five years. Summer being the season when these people are generally abroad, these low lodgings are then often crowded to excess. During the week-days the beggars and hawkers perambulate the country, returning on Saturday night. They frequently, especially when collected in large numbers, drink to excess; and their conduct on such occasions is riotous and disgusting in the extreme. The general charge for such lodgings is two-pence per head for the night, with an ample allowance of whiskey to the landlords, by way of perquisite.

These individuals are, unfortunately, the means of introducing infectious diseases, such as fever, small-pox, measles, &c. Measures have recently been adopted by the authorities in the neighbouring counties for repressing this grievous nuisance; and I sincerely trust that the authorities in this quarter will in the same way endeavour to rid the country of diseased and debauched vagrants.

Some time ago a teetotal society was instituted in the town, which, at its commencement, consisted of 140 individuals, principally of the lower class. The membership has since been reduced to about 20. Many of those who have joined themselves as members of this society have done so from no other motive than that of inducing dissipated persons to follow their example. Cases of intoxication are now, happily, uncommon, except at fairs and on occasions of special festivity. The morals of the lower classes are superior to those of the same rank in most other places. Crime and the grosser immoralities are uncommon, and the forms and decencies of religion are in general well observed.

Tain is abundantly supplied with fish of various kinds and of the best quality, by the numerous fishing villages along the shores of the Friths. This source of subsistence is much resorted to, and renders living in Tain comparatively cheap. The food of the working people generally consists of fish and potatoes. Butcher-meat sells from 4*d.* to 6*d.* per lb. In former years it rarely exceeded 4*d.* per lb.; but of late, since steam communication with London has been established, the graziers of the district ship cattle

largely, and it is this, in connexion with the recently introduced system of high feeding, that has chiefly occasioned the increased price of provisions in the Tain market.

Parish of Tarbat.—This parish, the termination of the promontory of Ross, is bounded on the south and east by the Murray Frith, on the north by the Dornoch Frith, and on the west by the parishes of Tain and Fearn. The population, according to the late census, was 1826: of these 388 families were engaged in agriculture, 246 in trade and manufactures, and 70 were otherwise employed. This is considered a good corn parish; and there are several agriculturists, originally from the south, who cultivate large farms. The soil is in some places light and sandy, but a considerable proportion of the large farms consists of a deep black loam, capable of bearing all ordinary farm produce. The plantations and hedges are of stunted growth: the general aspect is bare, and the air is keen and bracing.

The principal villages are Portmahomac and Balnabruach. Portmahomac is situated on a creek in the northern shore, and is the principal harbour in the Dornoch Frith: the population amounts to 400. About the middle of July the herring-fishing here commences, and it is continued with much activity until September. The number of boats engaged at this fishing station averages about 100; and the average take per boat is about 105 crans, sold to the curer at about 10s. 6d. per cran. During the rest of the year the fishermen are employed in fishing cod and haddocks; and these in some instances are cured for exportation, the remainder being sold throughout the country. With respect to the fishing population of this district, I may state that in general they are poor: their poverty may, in some instances, be traced to the fluctuations of their success in fishing, and an improvident expenditure when the fishing has been prosperous.

Many of these villagers have a small plot of ground attached to their houses, in which garden vegetables, principally potatoes, are reared; and these, along with fish, constitute almost their whole means of subsistence. The houses in these villages are irregularly built, and little or no attention is paid to ventilation or cleanliness. There are no resident proprietors in this parish. The real rental is about 5632*l.* sterling.

The average number of boats employed in the herring fishery at the several stations in Easter Ross is about 350; of these, 87 only belong to the district, the rest belong to the southern coast and are here only for the season. Each boat is manned by the owners, usually four in number. At the end of the season the amount of their earnings is divided among them. In successful seasons it averages about 70*l.* sterling, exclusively of the gains made by the cod-fishing, which is carried on about the same time. At other seasons the boats belonging to the district are employed in the *white* fishing for home consumption. The average amount

for the crew of each boat *during the year* does not exceed 160*l.* sterling, which has generally to be divided among four families. Out of this amount they have to expend for the necessary repairs of boats and fishing tackle about 20*l.* annually; thus, but a poor pittance is left for the support of each family, which in general consists of 6 or 7 souls. In their habits they are very indolent, and by no means cleanly. I know of no class of people among whom improvement has made less progress.

Parish of Fearn.—This parish is about two miles square, and is bounded on the south by the parish of Nigg, on the west by Loggie Easter, on the east by Tarbat and the Moray Frith, and on the north by the parish of Tain. The soil is various: it consists in many parts of a deep and rich loam, and it generally yields abundant crops. About three-fourths of the land is arable, the remainder being covered with heath and short grass. The arable land is in the highest state of cultivation; and its produce fetches the highest price in the London markets. The population is 1940; of these, 113 families subsist by field labour, and only 55 are engaged in trade. There are two fishing villages situated along the shore of the Moray Frith, having a population of about 955.

There are 8 landed proprietors in this parish, one only is resident. The real rental of the parish is about 5500*l.* The names of the fishing villages are Hillton and Balintore. The latter was once much frequented during the fishing season; and there is an extensive building for packing and preparing red-herrings, which, being now disused, serves only to indicate former prosperity. It is proposed to erect a harbour here suitable for ships; the site being considered the most eligible for that purpose on the northern shore of the Moray Frith, which is entirely destitute of such a convenience. The expense of this most desirable structure would be greatly diminished by the circumstance that there is an excellent stone-quarry on the very spot.*

Parish of Loggie Easter.—This parish rises with a gradual ascent towards the north, where, and towards the north-east, it is bordered with wood. It is about 7 miles in length and 3 in breadth; and is bounded on the south by Kilmuir Easter and Nigg, on the east by Fearn, and on the north by Tain and Ederton. The cultivated land consists of clay, on a light or sandy bottom; and it is considered to be in a high state of cultivation.

The population of this parish is 994; and, with few exceptions, the inhabitants are employed in agriculture. Hugh Rose Ross, Esq., of Cromarty, who is worthy of the most honourable mention as an improver of this district, lately established a tile-work in this parish, which promises to succeed well, and gives employment to many of the neighbouring people. Tiles are now exten-

* This parish contains the largest piece of fresh water in Easter Ross, called Loch Eye, which is two miles long and about half a mile in width.

sively used for drainage throughout the country. There are 4 landed proprietors connected with this parish. One only resides in it, viz. H. Ross, Esq., of Cromarty. The real rental is 2730*l*.

Parish of Nigg.—Nigg is the southernmost parish of the district and county, and is of a peninsular form. It is bounded on the south by the Moray Frith, on the west by the ferry and the Bay of Cromarty, on the north by the "sands" of Nigg and by part of Loggie Easter and of Fearn, and on the east by the Moray Frith and part of Fearn. A hill, or eminence, called "the Hill of Nigg," from the summit of which may be seen parts of seven counties, stretches from east to west along the southern border. The parish consists of this hill, of its northern declivity, called "the Strath," and of a narrow strip of meadow-land, called "the Lōns" (from the Gaelic word *lōn*, a meadow). Its surface is finely diversified, exhibiting, in miniature, almost every variety of scene; and, from its position, its eminences command a magnificence of land and sea prospect unequalled perhaps in Britain. The southern side of the hill is bold and precipitous, presenting the "celtissimæ rupes" of Buchanan, which are penetrated in many places by huge caverns, studded with stalactites, floored with pebbles, and filled with the heavy odour of cave-plants. These and the littoral rocks exhibit many interesting geological developments, which have recently attracted the attention of men of science. The soil is various, consisting, in several places, of a deep rich loam,—in others of a light lively mould,—in others of clay,—and, in the lōns or meadows, and in the hollows of the hills, of bog-earth, or of a mixture of white and bluish sand, full of small whinstones. There are excellent quarries of white and red sandstone; and limestone is common along the southern shore. A stratum of coal was long ago discovered at Portandruì, on the eastern shore, but it is not worked. Several rare plants are found in this parish; and it is much celebrated for its numerous springs of water, some of which are reckoned medicinal. At the western end of the mill-dam above Culnaha there is a spring of chalybeate water of considerable strength, which, if properly kept, might prove of public advantage. There are about 2050 acres under careful cultivation, and about 1000 acres which might be profitably cultivated. The grain sent from this parish is considered equal in quality to any grown in Britain; and its farmers possess the advantage of unusual facilities for the exportation of produce. According to the census of 1841 the population is 1435. Of these the majority obtain their sustenance by agricultural labour and by fishing.

There are two churches in this parish, one of which is among the oldest belonging to the United Secession; and there are four schools, viz. the parochial school, a female school, and two well-conducted voluntary schools, into one of which the most recent improvements in elementary education have been introduced. Connected with the Secession Church there is a select library,

founded by Mr. Douglas, of Cavers, to which the poorest class have ready access. I understand that this excellent institution is acknowledged by those who have availed themselves of it to be productive of much benefit. There are seven landholders in this parish; and of these only two are resident. The real rental amounts to 5000*l*. sterling. There are three villages inhabited by fishermen, viz. Shandwick, Balnabruach, and Balnapellin, the aggregate population of which amounts to 420. The climate of the parish of Nigg is reckoned bracing and salubrious. It has been remarked that less rain falls here than in any part of the adjacent district. The inhabitants have been noted for a spirit of independence, and for a laudable ambition of rising in society by industry at home or adventure abroad.

Parish of Kilmuir Easter.—This parish is about ten miles in length and four in breadth. It is bounded on the west by the parish of Ross-skeen, by Loggie Easter on the east, on the north by Edderton and Kincardine, and on the south by the Frith of Cromarty.

The parish contains about 17,000 acres, of which 2500 are arable, 1000 are pasturable, and 4500 are wood-land. The soil is various, but generally of a light, gravelly kind. The higher grounds are mostly barren moors. There is no, properly so called, fishing village in this parish, though at one time there was. The descendants of the former fishermen have now betaken themselves to trades. There are three villages in the parish, the population of the largest (Millton of New Tarbat, or Parkhill) being about 200. The population of this parish in 1841 was 1472. Of these 190 families are employed in agriculture, and 95 in different kinds of trade. There are six landowners; of these, three generally reside in the parish. The real rental is 3800*l*.

Parish of Ross-skeen.—Ross-skeen is bounded on the east by Kilmuir Easter, on the west by Alness, on the north by Kincardine and Edderton, and on the south by the Bay of Cromarty. Its extreme length is 30 miles, and its extreme breadth 12 miles. That part which stretches along the coast is level; the ground rises from the shore with a gentle acclivity for four miles, and thence becomes rough and hilly. There are about 3900 acres under cultivation, 30,000 uncultivated, and 3000 acres under-wood.

There are two hemp manufactories, which give employment to about 70 people, whose wages average from 9*s.* to 12*s.* a-week; and the spinning department occupies a considerable number of females throughout the parish. The population is 3185. Of these 1908 reside in villages, namely, Invergordon, Bridge-end of Alness, and Saltburn; of these Invergordon is the largest, containing a population of 1000. Having the advantage of a fine harbour, it is the principal seaport in Easter Ross, whence live-stock and grain are shipped for the Leith and London markets.

From its position, and the superiority of its natural advantages, Invergordon promises to become the largest and most flourishing town in the county.

There are five heritors connected with this parish; one of these only is resident. The real rental is about 6000*l.*

Parish of Edderton.—Edderton is bounded on the west by Kincardine, on the north by the Dornoch Frith, on the east by Tain, and on the south by Loggie Easter and Ross-skeen. Its length is 10 miles, and its breadth about 8. The soil is various, from the rich alluvial degenerating to the most sterile; about one-third is under cultivation, the remainder being unfit for tillage. The population, in 1841, was 970; of these 137 families were employed in agriculture, and 18 in trading.

There are three landowners, none of whom are resident. The real rental amounts to 2368*l.* 3*s.* 2*d.* sterling.

Parish of Kincardine.—Kincardine is bounded on the north by the parishes of Creech, Assynt, and Lochbroom, and by Edderton, Ross-skeen, and Loggie on the east and south. It is more than 35 miles in length, and varies in breadth from 5 to 20. There is very little arable land throughout the whole of this extensive range, which is mostly mountainous, and fit only for pasture. The number of inhabitants, in 1841, was 2115; of these 296 families are employed in agriculture, 48 in trade, and 98 are variously employed.

There are 8 landholders connected with this district, none of whom are resident. The real rental is from 4000*l.* to 5000*l.*

Having thus offered a slight sketch of the several parishes composing the district of Easter Ross, I now proceed to make a few remarks respecting the condition of the poorer classes in this district, with reference to employment and the means of subsistence. The poorer classes in Easter Ross subsist chiefly by field-labour or fishing. The district is now unquestionably one of the first in Scotland, both as to agricultural process and produce; its farmers yield to none in skill, enterprise, and success. Not long ago Easter Ross consisted of a series of small farms, presenting a numerous, virtuous, and happy tenantry; but now the system is quite changed, the small farms are few, and consist generally of intractable slips of moorland; the large farms are generally occupied by men of some capital, who have received a respectable education, and who, when steady and circumspect, are able to live comfortably, and to lay by something toward the education and settlement of their children. They are acquainted with, and ready to introduce as their means permit, the various and most recent improvements and refinements in agriculture. The extent of those called *large* farms is various, the average being probably about 400 acres; the extent of the former small farms, into which they were divided, was also various, the average being probably about 20 acres. The farms of Wester Rarichie

and Culliss, in the parish of Nigg, lately occupied by one person, and paying a rent of about 1300*l.*, were formerly divided into 17 farms, supporting 17 families. Now, as far as I have been able to learn, on consulting the most trustworthy authorities, these small farmers of former days lived comfortably and maintained a spirit of independence equal, at any rate, to that of their more refined and ambitious successors. I must not forget to add a circumstance so honourable to them as this,—that they gave their children the very best education their means would permit,—an education equal in quality, if not in show, even to that now afforded to their children by most of their affluent supplanters. I have been credibly informed that not a few of them were proficient in Latin literature, and that the recitation of long “Screeds,” from their favourite Roman poets, was not unfrequently one of their ingle-side recreations. But as this simple, manly, and patriarchal race, the sinews of Scotland, have become extinct, or nearly so, in this quarter, I must refrain from dwelling further on their circumstances, however much I may feel attracted to the subject, by respect for a class from the bosom of which have undoubtedly sprung many of our country’s bravest defenders and brightest ornaments. Their successors, it must be admitted, if not braver and better men, are far superior to them in agricultural science and artificial refinement. They may be behind the English farmers in horticultural taste and improvement; but as skilful agriculturists, good citizens, and kind masters, they are equal I believe to any class in Scotland. Besides the farmers, those who subsist in this district by field-labour may be divided into—1st, crofters; 2nd, farm-servants; and 3rd, occasional field or day labourers. 1st. The crofters are tenants-at-will, who cultivate a very small piece of land, from 1 to 5 acres, generally either a patch of moorland on the pitlands, or remote corners of an estate or large farm, for which they often pay exorbitantly, as much as their neighbours do for the best land. Their crofts being insufficient for their full employment or support, they generally have recourse to some trade, or labour occasionally with the neighbouring farmers. Their lot is precarious, for their “wee bit” may, they know not how soon, be incorporated with the “big farm,” and little or no encouragement is given them toward building or improvement. 2nd, Farm-servants: on an average there are from 4 to 5 servants on a farm, the half of whom are generally married, and live in detached or connected cottages, each consisting of commonly two rooms and a closet. These cottages are strongly built and watertight, and so constructed as to be capable of adequate ventilation. The unmarried servants live in barrack-like buildings, called “bothies,” where they themselves dress their food, and where they may live comfortably and cheerfully. The fare of the farm-servants is coarse, though substantial and wholesome, con-

sisting chiefly of farm produce, but they are not strangers to the luxury of a cup of tea. They are remunerated as follows: the foreman, or griever, generally gets 10*l.* per annum, besides 6 bolls of meal, 6 bolls of potatoes, 12 barrels of coals, a cart-load of peats, a pint of sweet milk a-day, and about 900 yards of drill for potato-land, for which he supplies manure and seed, and which he cultivates at his own cost.

Married ploughmen get 6*l.* or 7*l.*, with the preceding additions. Unmarried ploughmen get the same remuneration, with the exception that they have a smaller allowance of potatoes. Cattle-men have the same wages as the ploughmen. Herd-boys get 3*l.* or 4*l.* annually, with food in the farm-house. Female house-servants have wages to the amount of 3*l.* or 4*l.*, with food. Farm-servants are in general well and warmly clothed, the males in corduroys, or coarse woollen stuffs; the females in flannel petticoats and cotton-prints. The females go bare-headed, or wear "mutches," which they take a particular pride in keeping neat and clean. Most of them also are provided with warm blue cloaks. The men always wear strong worsted stockings and thick shoes, or half-boots. The young women during summer often go bare-footed; the morals of this class of people are reckoned exemplary. They are much exposed to damp and wet, and generally not careful to prevent the ill consequences of such exposure; and I have no hesitation in pronouncing that to this cause, with the want of *seasonable* medical aid, may be attributed the majority of deaths among the young of this class. It is a duty of farmers—and one which should be earnestly impressed on them—to instruct their servants how to escape the baneful consequences of exposure to damp and wet, and to see that their instructions are attended to. After such exposure, as soon as they have ceased working, servants should be directed or reminded to change their clothes and shoes and stockings, and put on dry ones, and by exercise to prevent themselves from feeling chilly after work. I am persuaded that habitual attention to this simple direction would prevent many an indisposition, and tend considerably to diminish the number of deaths among this large and meritorious class, preventing moreover much delay and disappointment to their employers. These remarks will apply also to the other classes of labouring poor.

(3.) Occasional field or day labourers are employed either in weeding, hoeing, and reaping, performed chiefly by women; or in trenching, digging drains, making or mending fences, &c. Men of this class earn from 7*s.* to 9*s.* a-week; women earn by reaping 1*s.* a day, and for other employments 6*d.* a day; their dress is similar to that of farm-servants, only less uniform. Their condition is generally less easy and comfortable, in consequence of the uncertainty and fluctuations of their employment.

The next most numerous class of labourers in this district are

the fishermen. They are supported by the profits of the herring season, and by occasional fishing throughout the year. The crew of each boat consists of four men, among whom the profits are equally divided; the average price of a cran of herrings is 10*s.* 6*d.* Our fishermen cultivate potatoes to a considerable extent, both for use and sale; they pay for their land in manure. Their cottages, some time ago, were miserable cabins of the lowest description, receptacles of filth and nauseating effluvia; but I am happy to add that a great improvement has recently become manifest as to this class of cottages. On the shores of Nigg and Fearn, especially, the houses of the fishermen are well and comfortably constructed, many of them being, indeed, superior to most of those of the rural population. However, along the whole coast, there is still room for much improvement; for many of the huts are mere hovels, with scarcely any provision for the admission of light and fresh air; and in the immediate vicinity of even the most respectable houses heaps of stinking garbage, mixed with various sorts of filth, are allowed to accumulate and load the air with unwholesome effluvia. The general health of this class cannot be improved till these nuisances are removed, and till the inhabitants learn the importance of ventilation and personal cleanliness. As to ventilation, they seem to have no idea whatever of its importance; but, as to personal cleanliness, I am happy to say, they appear of late to have made considerable advancement. They are, in general, well and warmly clad in blue woollen stuffs. The men always wear stout shoes or tall sea-boots; the women, except in winter, or on Sundays, generally go barefooted. They have the reputation of being a very prolific race; intermarriages with the rural population are very uncommon; and it is seldom that the children deviate from the perilous craft of their fathers. They are characterized by peculiar notions and practices; and they have a certain feudal spirit, or *pride of order*, which tends to preserve them as a *separate* community, and to promote concord among themselves. Their morals are not below those of any class of the community; and the villages of Shandwick and Ballintore deserve to be particularly noticed for the respectability of their appearance, the cleanliness of their habits, the civility and decorum of their manners, the purity of their morals, and their exemplary attention to religious duties whether at sea or on land. Though more exposed to damp and wet than any other class, they seem to suffer little from this cause,—a circumstance that may be attributed to early and continued habit. They are, in general, a well-made, good-looking, and healthy class. If they paid more attention to ventilation, and domestic and general cleanliness, disease would, probably, be unfrequent and less fatal among them.

The next class I shall notice are the artisans. The most common of these are masons, joiners, cartwrights, blacksmiths,

coopers, weavers, shoemakers, and tailors. The weavers have no regular employment, but execute private orders for coarse woollen stuffs, blankets, &c.; and they do not wholly depend on their trade for subsistence. The tailors are in general very inferior workmen in all matters of proportion and taste. The charges of our artisans are generally moderate; but those who are skilful and regularly employed are able to live comfortably. Cases of destitution among this class are frequent; cases of dissipation are not rare; and they seem less healthy and more subject to disease than either the field-labourers or fishermen. Their houses are generally equal to those of the married farm-servants; some of them, as those of the masons and house-carpenters, are better finished and better furnished. Their clothing is, in general, warm and respectable.

The next class to which I shall allude are the shopkeepers.—In Tain there are upwards of 72 of this class. Of these none are to be reckoned among the poorer orders,—several of them having large establishments, and being able to educate and maintain their families in a highly respectable and creditable manner. Altogether, indeed, this class is equal in character and comfort to those of the same calling in most of our provincial towns.

There are also rural shopkeepers throughout the district, whose number and business have of late much increased. Their system is, to a considerable extent, conducted by barter. In exchange for merchandise, such as tea, sugar, and soap, they take country produce, especially eggs, which they send to the London market. The average price of eggs is *four-pence* per dozen; and large quantities of these are now in this way profitably exported. Poor people in this district are enabled to keep poultry at a very trifling expense; and they are thus able to obtain many little comforts which would be otherwise beyond their reach. The rural shopkeepers are generally natives of the parish in which their shop is situated, and are persons who have been enabled to set up by dint of industry, saving, and good character; but, from the facilities or temptations which their insulated positions offer to fraud, I would suggest the propriety of having their weights and measures frequently inspected.

I shall now briefly revert to the construction, situation, &c., of the houses of the labouring classes in this district. Those of the farm-servants are built in the immediate proximity of the farm-steading, in a line with each other, forming as it were one side of a short street: some of these houses have immediately in front a pavement or causeway. On many of the large farms the houses are roofed with tiles or blue slate; the more common practice, however, is to thatch them with straw and clay; and they are generally kept water-tight. Their site is, in general, dry, though frequently too near the fold or court of offices. Most of them have pigsties either before or behind; but rarely immediately attached

to them. The dwelling-houses are usually constructed of stone or mud-work. The flooring is made of a mixture of earth and clay, wood flooring being seldom used. The fireplace and chimneys are well constructed. All the rooms ordinarily are used as dormitories. They are generally kept clean and in good order, the walls being whitewashed with lime. The furniture consists of a few chairs, a cupboard, a table, and a bed; curtains are often seen in the best apartment, but in general they are closely shut up with boards,—a practice detrimental to health. Their bed-ticks are stuffed with straw or chaff; feather-beds are not used in such houses.

The houses of crofters and day-labourers are generally inferior to those of farm-servants. They are also less cleanly in their habits: in many cases they and their cattle live under the same roof. In not a few cases their houses are constructed wholly of turf, the smoke being allowed to find its way out wherever it can find an aperture. In many cases, the cattle enter through the same door with the inmates, and the “domestic” fowls, strictly so called, perch themselves on the rafters or couples above the heads of their lords. This description, however, is happily applicable only to the minority, and the more ancient of these dwellings. The houses of artisans and shopkeepers depend for their comfort and accommodation, in a great measure, on the industry, character, and success of their occupiers. There is no manufactory worthy of particular notice in this district. Many of the cottars, in Nigg and Ross-skeen especially, contrive to eke out a livelihood by spinning hemp for the manufactories in Cromarty and Invergordon. I may remark here that there is a conspicuous and lamentable want of commercial and manufacturing enterprise throughout this and the other districts of the north. The disposition of capitalists seems to be rather to secure what they have earned by industry and frugality, than, by speculating, to employ it as a lever to raise their fortunes and the general interests of the community. In proof of this I need only add that *seven* northern counties required the co-operation of Aberdeen to enable them to maintain one steam-boat in carrying on the direct communication between these ports and London.

It must be remarked that the number of *real* paupers is known to be double that of those who actually apply for relief. Delicacy, or a species of pride, or commiseration for those who are more depressed and wretched than themselves, prevents the former from becoming candidates for the miserable pittance doled out to them by the Kirk Session. Indeed, from the scantiness of the funds, it often happens that importunate applicants are sent away unrelieved. In some parishes it is the custom to attach the furniture of the pauper after his death at the instance of the Kirk Session, in order to swell the pauper funds. The average value of the furniture is from 5*s.* to 15*s.*

The only other resource of the poor is mendicancy. The houses of almost all the respectable inhabitants of the district are open to vagrant beggars. Considerable sums are often collected in this manner by the poor. Some respectable families in the country contribute largely to the vagrant poor—much more so than they would have to do, were a legal assessment in force. The expense of supplying wandering mendicants falls most heavily and disproportionately on the benevolent and kind-hearted.

There are several maniacs who wander about this district, and who depend solely on charity for a precarious and miserable subsistence. They are generally of a harmless character; but exceptions occur. Some years ago one of this class, on a very slight provocation, killed another idiot by hitting him on the head with a stone. After his trial and conviction he was quite unmanageable, and, refusing to eat, soon died. Some of these poor, uncared-for wretches once earned a respectable livelihood. It is surely a heavy reproach on the authorities that there is no provision made for supporting maniacs and for alleviating their sufferings; and it is a circumstance honourable to the manners of the people, though not so to the preventive policy of their so-called protectors, that so few accidents occur from the unrestrained and fitful passions of the maniacs who are suffered to roam at large over the district.

It must not be supposed that poverty is confined to the enrolled paupers. It may too often be found in the turf cabin of the lower sort of crofters, whose few acres of sterile ground are not sufficient, after the most patient cultivation, to yield even a supply of potatoes, the only or principal article of their aliment. How are these, when infirm or old, enabled to pay their rent, except, perhaps, by begging in a quarter where they are not known?

Among this class isolated cases of continued fever are to be met with at all seasons, but more frequently from the month of October till April; and when any epidemic or contagious disease prevails among them, it commonly diffuses itself with a fearful rapidity and malignity. The state of such families on these occasions is truly pitiable. Out of many similar cases that have come under my own observation, I mention the following. Some months ago, while passing through the western part of the parish of Edderton, I was waited on by a female who besought me to visit her sick husband. I complied, and was led to a miserable hut, consisting of two small apartments, one of which was used both for kitchen and byre, wherein I found two half-naked children and a starveling heifer. In the second lay the husband, in the last stage of continued fever. He had now been ill for three weeks; and during the last week he could get no assistance towards turning him in bed, his wife, who happened to be in the last stage of pregnancy, being utterly unable to do so. On his back

I found a large bed-sore. All the cash in the house consisted of 1s. 6d., and the eatables of a peck of meal and a few potatoes. The whole furniture was not worth 20s. A day or two thereafter I again visited this wretched family. I found that, during my absence, the mother was delivered, her only attendant being a feeble old woman; and I found a child of five years of age nursing the infant, whilst the mother was obliged, in this situation, to attend to the household duties. A few hours after I left, the husband was a corpse. This helpless family could not afford medical attendance, and seemed very grateful for the two gratuitous though unsuccessful visits paid them by me. On a representation of their case to some humane persons in the neighbourhood, a temporary supply of necessaries was sent them; and a collection was made in the parish for their behoof, which amounted to 5*l.* Two brothers of this cotter died of the same fever shortly before, none of whom received medical assistance; and all the three were able-bodied, stout young men.

Typhus fever is rarely met with in this district; frequently, however, synochus in its last stage assumes the typhoid symptoms, and in this state invariably proves fatal among the poorer classes. I believe that in every instance febrile diseases spread from the town into the country; the rural and urban poor being greatly predisposed to such diseases. This predisposition does not, in my opinion, arise so much from the filthiness of their persons and abodes as from the nature and insufficiency of their diet, which consists of potatoes with an occasional herring, or piece of oat-cake. Butcher-meat is far beyond their attainment, and is very seldom tasted even by the better sort of workmen and labourers. The quantity and insufficiency of their food has a tendency to occasion disease of the digestive organs and to weaken and deteriorate the whole system, rendering it incapable of resisting the poison of contagion, even in its mildest form. These causes produce indigestion, and irritable and strumous habit of body, organic disease of the lungs, liver, spleen, and kidneys, and mesenteric glands. The last of these is of very frequent occurrence, especially among children. The want of a provision toward women lying-in is much to be deplored, this important duty being in general intrusted to a set of inexperienced old quacks who call themselves midwives. Death is a frequent consequence of their mode of treatment; and the wives of the district have to thank their constitution and hardy habits that it is not more frequent. It is seldom, indeed, that medical skill is called in till the manifest symptoms of death have frightened them to try the last resource.

On being lately called to attend a young female who was lying-in, I found her surrounded by a set of old women who had, previously to my arrival, plied her so freely with whiskey, that she was visibly in a state of intoxication! Now this was a "de-

cent" country-woman, and the ardent spirits had been given her by the attendants on the specious plea of shortening her sufferings.

In 1832 cholera appeared in Easter Ross, during the fishing season. It was, with a few exceptions, confined to the fishing villages, where it found a field but too ripe for its fatal operations. In the remote village of Inver, situated on the low sandy shore of the Tain Frith, and notorious for its nausea, its ravages were fearfully rapid. Here it cut off nearly the half of the inhabitants. The town of Tain and most of the rural districts escaped this visitation. During the prevalence of cholera, a Board of Health, empowered by Act of Parliament, was established in every parish. The exertions of this Board prevented all communication with the infected places. Medical assistance was amply provided. The houses of the poor were cleaned and white-washed, medicine was furnished, meat and clothing supplied to the indigent, and their huts underwent a thorough cleansing. During the cholera panic, many of the inhabitants forsook their houses, and dwelt in lonely places, as far as possible apart from any human haunt. No sooner, however, did cholera disappear than these Boards were broken up, and matters as to the condition of the poor returned to their pristine posture.

As there is no registration of diseases, deaths, or burials, or any chronicle of the causes of mortality, kept in this district, I have no data or materials towards a full and accurate nosological report.

There is no institution whatever toward affording medical aid to the sick poor. The ratio of mortality is high: in my opinion 19 out of 20 die without having had the benefit of medical advice. The nearest dispensary or infirmary is that of Inverness, distant from Tain about 35 miles. This district is considered to be well supplied with medical men; but it is also unfortunately infested by a set of empirics or quacks, and of ignorant midwives, who, though they have never received any medical education, nor, indeed, any education whatever, yet practise largely and lucratively among the country people, pretending to understand the most difficult and complicated cases. This class of impostors are most mischievous and dangerous. When a medical man is called to attend any of their patients, his first and painful duty generally is to announce the near and now inevitable approach of death.

I have thus, Gentlemen, presented to your notice, with as much correctness as the circumstances of my information would allow, the principal facts and statements that seemed to be demanded by the nature of the Report which you did me the honour to assign me: and, in conclusion, I would briefly recapitulate and animadvert on some of the more prominent parts of that Report, and make such suggestions respecting them as I deem worthy of your closest consideration. I shall accordingly advert—

1. To the state of *pauperism* in Easter Ross. It has been seen

that the number of those in this district whom destitution drives to vagrancy is comparatively small, but that the number of those who suffer from a want of the means of proper and sufficient nutriment or diet is very considerable. It has been seen, also, that the kirk collections are not applied wholly to the support of the parochial poor; and that, even if they were wholly so applied, they are far from being adequate for the purpose. It appears, further, that, especially at certain seasons, this district is overrun with clamorous vagrants from *other* quarters; and I am persuaded that, if the alms given to such in each parish were confined to the poor of the parish, they would be almost sufficient for their adequate support. I would suggest on this subject that there should be an equitable and regular assessment in each parish for the support of the poor of *that* parish *alone*; that the assessment should be made by a Board of Guardians of the poor, elected by the householders of the parish; that one of the resident landowners, or of the accredited agents of the non-resident, should be, in rotation, authorised to call meetings of said board, and act as their chairman or president; that the assessment be in proportion to the rental or income; that the kirk collections for the poor should be under the direction and at the disposal of the Board, but that the clergy and kirk sessions have no control in any respect over the Board, and that all its proceedings be conducted without regard to religious or sectarian distinction, and be carried on in an open manner. The institution of such a Board, I am convinced, would meet with no opposition from the well-disposed part of the community, and would add but little, if anywise, to their present expense toward the support of the poor. But, as a preliminary step, it would be necessary to carry into effect sufficient measures for the prevention of vagrancy, or the intrusion of beggars of any description from other quarters. There exist, unquestionably, ample means within the district for the *adequate* support of *all* its poor; and the method I have indicated seems to me the best calculated to bring these means to bear satisfactorily both with respect to the poor and those on whom their support must depend. But I repeat, the preliminary step *must* not be neglected.

Though proclamations against vagrants annually make a formidable appearance in the newspapers, yet, as there is no police or provision in this district towards executing their purpose, they of course prove nothing better than mere idle threats, laughed at by the beggars themselves. I would further suggest that the institution I have proposed be compulsory only as an *experiment*, a definite but sufficient time being fixed for its duration, at the expiration of which, if the majority of those on whom the burden falls be opposed to its continuance, it shall cease to be compulsory. As it is an established fact that many deaths occur every year among the poor, apparently from the want of seasonable medical aid, it should be a principal object of the proposed Board to

engage, at a fixed annual allowance (which need be but small), a proper medical person, who shall be bound to attend any of the poor of the parish whenever called on to do so. This measure is more desirable and urgent from the absurd prejudices against "the doctors" unhappily still so prevalent among the vulgar, and which often prevent them from receiving medical aid, even when they might have it *gratuitously*. I believe, indeed, the medical men of the district are always, when they have their time at their own disposal, ready to advise the poor gratis, and even to attend them gratuitously in cases of peculiar urgency. It would be proper, perhaps necessary, that the Board should appoint an officer or messenger, one of whose principal duties it should be to call the doctor when his services are required for the poor, as well as to report to a superintendent appointed by the Board all cases in which medical aid may be presumed desirable. The feelings and prejudices of the poor, in my opinion, render these appointments necessary.

With respect to the working classes generally, I would remark, 2ndly, That in this district they seem in no instance to have availed themselves of *the principle of association*, productive of such advantages both to themselves and the public in England, and especially in Holland. They have no "Benefit Societies" of any description; this is a glaring desideratum, proceeding partly from the narrowness of their means, but chiefly from ignorance. This is a circumstance which I would earnestly press upon the consideration of all who have any influence over them, and who feel a real interest in their improvement.

I would observe, 3rdly, with reference to education among the poor, that it is very defective and superficial, partly from the want of a vigilant and effective supervision of the schools, partly from the prevalence of Gaelic, but chiefly from the irregular attendance of the children. The winter is here the season selected by the poor for the instruction of their children at school. Then a miscellaneous crowd of youth of all ages, released from the labours of the harvest-field, flock to the parish school; but unfortunately, as soon as the active round of rural labour returns, as soon as the nights grow short, the fagging ends, and the poor urchins are withdrawn, to forget, during a long summer of toil, almost all that they had learnt during the few and short days of winter. Poor parents employ their children at an early age on various easy kinds of work, such as herding, weeding, and hoeing; and so little sensible are they of the importance of education, or so little do they value what is to be learnt in their schools, that they allow their children to play the truant on the most frivolous pretences. It is undeniable that the whole system of parochial scholastics in this quarter requires a thorough inspection and revision.

4thly. In the formation of large farms by the aggregation of

several small ones, I would, in order to prevent the increase of pauperism, or the necessity of emigration, recommend a gradual process, such as the following: at the death of each tenant I would, according to an expressed agreement, transfer his piece of ground to the next tenant who possessed the largest farm, and proceed thus till all the small farms had coalesced into one. In this way each tenant would foresee so far the fate of his family, and be enabled to provide for their support after his decease; and a general and sudden dispersion of the tenantry, with the consequent outcry, uncertainty, and misery, would be prevented. Thus, likewise, might the landholders avoid the reproach of injustice, cruelty, or avarice, and the public might be saved many an appeal to their passions and their pockets. I can, indeed, think of no obstacle to this plan but what would proceed from an avarice reckless of the body of the people.

5thly. I would again notice here the fact that there is in this district no registration of deaths. The attention of the legislature having been recently directed to this subject with respect to Scotland, I trust this *desideratum* will be soon supplied. I think it will be desirable and necessary that the registration should be *compulsory*, and be wholly under the direction of the civil authorities. A coroner's inquest is also a glaring *desideratum* in the list of our institutions, which, I trust, will be soon supplied in connection with the proposed introduction of a general, uniform, and compulsory system of registration.

6thly. It appears that the most prevalent diseases among the poor in this district are fevers, to which they are predisposed by insufficient, meagre, or unwholesome food; or distempers proceeding from exposure to cold or damp. The influential cannot be too earnest in impressing repeatedly upon their dependants the importance of seasonably using the usual and proper precautions against the ill effects of wet and cold. Inattention to personal and domestic cleanliness, and especially to ventilation, largely contributes in this quarter to foster and aggravate disease. Old persons, when attacked by illness, however slightly, generally betake themselves to bed with the expectation and intention of not rising again. This baneful custom, which prematurely prostrates strength and causes much inconvenience, ought to be discountenanced. I have already noticed the propensity of the vulgar to encourage and confide in quacks, of which, I doubt not, many a death is the consequence. Those who are accountable for the prejudices of the vulgar ought to look to this. The poor suffer much from ignorance and prejudice—though, as a distinguished writer somewhat paradoxically remarks, "the vulgar have not *their* prejudices—they have the prejudices of those who ought to remove them if they had any." After all that legislation can do for the poor, much, very much must be left to the personal influence and the private and benevolent exertions of indi-

viduals of that class on whom they depend; who, if they knew and practised their social duties, would be sparing in superfluities to themselves, that they might supply necessities to others. It is much to be regretted, with reference to the poor especially, that so many of the landowners of this district are absentees or non-resident. It is truly much to be desired that proprietors should act in accordance with "a sound conception of the right to property—namely, as being *official*, implying and demanding the performance of commensurate duties." If they but acted thus, legislation would have less to do—indeed there would be no occasion for "Poor Laws."

I have now, Gentlemen, furnished you with such a Report respecting the district of Easter-Ross as my means of information enabled me to make, and the objects of your commission seemed to require. I am prepared to assign sufficient authority for all my facts and statements; and I shall be gratified if my report, such as it is, receive your approbation, and contribute in any degree to promote the immediate purpose and ultimate object of your Inquiry.

I have the honour to be, Gentlemen,
With the highest respect,
Your obedient servant,
JAMES CAMERON,
Surgeon.

To
The Poor Law Commissioners.
Tain, August, 1841.

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