



THE PUBLIC HEAVEN.

Local Government Act.

From the *Whitehaven Herald*, September 26, 1893.

To the Editor of the *Whitehaven Herald*.

Sir.—That reliable organ, the *Paquet*, of Tuesday last, informs its readers, in two columns of twaddle, that during the last few weeks the town of Whitehaven "has been in a most excited and unhealthy state." Then who are culpable for this most unhealthy state of the town? Months ago the town trustees were not only warned, but they were urged and entreated to take action against pigs and nuisances, and all which was then said was so said in vain. The Rev. Joseph Burns now assures us that the Board of Trustees already possess ample powers under the Nuisances Removal Act, which they might have exercised long ago, if so inclined; and in the majority of his indignation, exclaims, "Then all this outcry about increased powers is about nothing!" The *Paquet* follows the leading of the rev. gentleman, and alleges "that in the Nuisances Removal Act alone the trustees have powers which are AMPLÉ for all ordinary sanitary purposes," and "that all, and MORE THAN ALL, we require here can be accomplished, and accomplished much better, without the powers of the Local Government Act."

But Mr Lumb, Chairman of the Trustees (not the Mayor of Whitehaven), publicly stated, a few weeks ago, that the trustees had been remiss in their duties, but they intended for the future to act with vigour, to meet once a week and adopt measures, and not having sufficient power to put the town into a proper sanitary condition, fresh powers would be obtained by application to Parliament.

Mark how he put the facts. What a pretty sequence! Shortly thus:—Past neglect—future promises—lack of power—more power. What followed at the Board? Nothing but a vain attempt to go for an Act of Parliament next session—a failure by Mr Pittison to incur that needless expense—then temporizing and bickering of a character altogether unworthy of a place in civilized life.

Mr Thompson, with his usual candour and manliness, assured the public that the trustees, or at least a large number of them predominant at the Board, had done nothing, and would do nothing, to promote sanitary measures, if they could help it. And there he hit the right nail. Help if they cannot, for the town, as a body, requires the aid of the Local Government Act, and the trustees cannot refuse. It is a ratepayers' question. It is their earnest and determined resolve to have the sad and deplorable state of the town improved, and thus prevent fever and other diseases; to ensure health and comfort, so far as human means and the Public Health Acts will avail; and to wipe out for ever that blot upon the town which has marked it so long as the filthiest in the county.

But the *Paquet* hopes the trustees, "in their wisdom, will manfully resist the Act." Oh, ye Gods! Has it come to this so soon? Last week the *Paquet* professed to be the advocate of every rational measure of sanitary reform which has been propounded. I suppose the writer was then in low water—sick and depressed; now he is hale and hearty.

When the d—l was sick the d—l a saint would be,
But when he got well the d—l a saint was he.

So in seven short days the *Paquet*, inspired by the Rev Gentleman, finds the Nuisances Removal Act alone ample and more than all we require, and hopes the trustees will manfully resist the attempt to force upon them the adoption of the Public Health Act! Is this the wisdom and advice of the *Paquet*, that consistent friend of the people? For this and similar favours, many thanks. Thank him for nothing!

The *Paquet's* advice, forsooth!—as Hamlet said of the physic,—"We'll have none of it." Better counsel is offered. The town well understand the matter, and prefer life and comfort to sickness and death. The remedy is obtainable, and the public will have it. The trustees are not, the town, but the representatives of the ratepayers; and I believe that the majority of the trustees will do the right thing, regardless of the *Paquet* and the Rev. Joseph Burns.

Far above them there beams a light bright as the sun at noonday, from whence comes an assurance, noble, genuine, and patriotic. On that the people rely with confidence as firmly as they believe in the justice and

necessity of the measure which they demand.
How differently and properly the subject is considered in higher quarters, appears from the statement of a trustee, as follows:—

"Mr JAMES LUMB said.—At last meeting of the Board, I stated to you Lord Jonsdale's regret that the town should be in such a condition, and since that time I have had some further correspondence with his lordship, in which his lordship repeats that he is deeply concerned about the existing state of things. If an expression of opinion this day is all that is wanted by the public, I am instructed, on behalf of the lord of the manor, to say that if it is the general wish of the town to have the Public Health Acts introduced, his lordship will not be opposed to their introduction."

Are these the generous sentiments of the noble lord? Yes, most assuredly so; and they fully accord with the views of all right-thinking men.

Here is enough for the *Paquet* to digest at present. But he tries out Mr Rowntree of Penrith so freely, that I think the outrageous misrepresentations and deceptions attempted to be foisted on the town may now be exposed and refuted.

An inhabitant and ratepayer of Penrith says Mr Rowntree is one of the oldest and bitterest opponents of the Public Health Acts (therefore his opinions are of little value); that the total expenditure of the Penrith Board has been about £15,000, of which the Water Works cost £11,862, and the sewerage, for a population of 7,000, cost £3,300. The mortality has been reduced to 19 persons in 1000, and the advantage of the Act to the district is incalculable. The Penrith Board of Health, besides the Water Works, have the lighting and paving of the town, and the district rate for the whole is only 2s 8d in the pound per annum on tenements above £6; and 2s in the pound on those under that rateable value. The authorities of the city of Carlisle adopted the Public Health Acts, and since that the mortality there has decreased amazingly. The district rate of Carlisle for repayment of borrowed money, sewerage, lighting, paving, flagging, repairing streets, and all other expenses, is only 1s 9d in the pound. Now the Water Works for Whitehaven have cost upwards of £26,000, and the rate is 1s in the pound. The rate for lighting and paving the streets is 1s 4d in the pound per annum; and if the sewerage of the town and sanitary improvements should involve an additional rate of 4d, or even 6d in the pound (which would be ample) the inhabitants would be fully compensated in the additional comfort of their homes, and the avoidance of fever and other preventible diseases, and the agony of lamenting the loss of kindred and friends, and they would secure the physical, social, & moral improvement of the population, a reduction of poor rates, and the increased value of property; and lastly, the satisfaction of having performed a necessary Christian duty in adopting those prudent measures which are found to be so beneficial in all other large towns in the kingdom.

One word regarding that famous report by Mr Burrell, which the Board never asked him to prepare. Wherever he has obtained his experience and information, it matters not; but if the estimate of expense was intended to "hood-wink" and "mislead" the intelligent people of Whitehaven, it has signally failed in that object, for we know that the town is favourably situated for effecting good and economical sewerage; that materials and labour are cheap; that if the cost at Gateshead was only 6s 3d per head of the population, and Penrith (the place so blessed with Mr Rowntree!) only 9s 6d per head, upon what principle should the cost be heavier at Whitehaven? Those who are experienced in such works calculate the whole expense for this town should not exceed £10,000; and that a rate of 6d in the pound will be sufficient. If it be a money question, that may be considered as a trifling cost; but such is the lowest and most selfish view to take of the subject. Why halt so long between two opinions? With comfort, health, and life on the one hand—dir, degradation, and death on the other? A revolution must be made. Let us make choice, and support one side or the other, and future generations will record, in letters of gold, or in the blood of fever victims, whether the ravings of the *Paquet*, or the calm and rational appeals of the inhabitants, are based on that rock of Truth which will stand the test of ages.

A RATEPAYER.

Whitehaven, September 24.

The Inhabitants of Cocker-mouth have adopted the Local Government Act by a large majority!