

THE NEW POOR LAWS.

The Memorial agreed to at a public meeting of the rate payers of this Township, held at the Workhouse on the 9th inst. is now lying for signature, we perceive, at the several booksellers shops in this town. Annexed is a copy of the document:—

To the Poor Law Commissioners for England and Wales.
The Memorial of the undersigned rated Inhabitants of the Township of Whitehaven, in the Parish of Saint Bees, in the County of Cumberland.

Your Memorialists state that the affairs of the Poor in the said Township have been managed hitherto by four Overseers of the Poor, a Visitor, and a Guardian, assisted by a Committee of fifteen other rated Inhabitants, elected at a Public Meeting of the Rate Payers held annually on the twenty-fifth day of March, at the Workhouse, in the Township of Whitehaven, being a district formed under the 22d Geo. III, c. 83, and Public Notice given, so that all parties may attend and protect their rights.

That in and previous to 1820 the Poor Rates of the Township amounted to about 6,000*l.* annually; and since that period the same have been reduced to 2,100*l.* or an average of the last three years, thus exhibiting a strong and irresistible proof that the rates have been administered with economy.

As respects Out-door Paupers no relief to able-bodied Paupers has been given; this class of persons on applying for relief being offered work, and the result is, that no burthen has fallen on the Township from able-bodied Paupers; the only out-door relief given is that which is afforded to fatherless children, and in cases of accident; and temporary sickness.

The Whitehaven Workhouse is divided into wards, the occupants able to work are kept in employment, and their earnings for the last year amounted to 117*l.*, and nothing more can be obtained from the labour of the resident paupers.

The Township of Whitehaven contains a population of nearly 16,000 persons, and the proposed Union, comprising a district including twenty-nine parishes with a population of not more than 40,000, would be a grievance of which your Memorialists have a right to complain, for the cost of carrying into operation the proposed measure of forming a Union of the twenty-nine parishes will subject the Township of Whitehaven to the payment of nearly, if not quite, one half of the increased charges.

Your Memorialists further state, that if they should be compelled to form the proposed Union the increased expense which will fall on the Township of Whitehaven will not be short of 4,000*l.* annually, and before you sanction such a change your Memorialists feel assured you will take into consideration the extreme hardship of subjecting them to such increased expenditure, when the present management is satisfactory both to the rate-payers and the poor.

Influenced by these considerations your Memorialists request you will allow them to continue to manage the affairs of the poor of the Township of Whitehaven as has been done for many years.

CP 17 JAN 1837

Peep's Soup Fund.—The Trustees for the present year's management of this fund have received an anonymous donation of one guinea, inscribed with the motto "Psalm 107. Verses 29, 30; 31," which they will take care faithfully to apply to the purposes of the institution. A much greater number of families have made application this season for soup than usual, and it is with regret that the Trustees have been compelled to lessen the quantity usually given to persons with large families in order to let all who applied have a portion; and limited as their funds are, and high as is the cost of the necessaries of life, they fear they will be compelled to cease furnishing soup to the poor sooner than they have heretofore done, unless a few more benevolent individuals come forward to aid them. The quantity of soup delivered out every Tuesday and Saturday averages about 320 quarts each day.

LOCAL INTELLIGENCE.

RETURN OF THE POOR.—We refer with much pleasure to the proceedings at a public meeting held in this town on Tuesday last, and to the list of subscriptions for the relief of the poor, which will be found in other parts of our present number. The meeting was convened at a very short notice, yet was well attended, and every one seemed actuated by the kindest feelings towards his poor and suffering neighbours. The resolutions which precede the list of subscribers will put the reader in possession of the plan of management, and we may observe that a numerous and active committee have more than realised the expectations or wishes of those who felt most keenly for the hardships and sufferings of those unfortunate fellow townsmen. Many of the collectors entered upon their allotted duty almost immediately after the meeting, and in the course of Wednesday the collections were completed. On Thursday relief was given to many poor families, who expressed the deepest gratitude for so timely a mitigation of their sufferings, and in the course of Friday many hundreds of tickets for potatoes, meal, and flour were presented to the most distressed. On Saturday the Committee were actively employed in the same good work, and yesterday they entered upon their duty with renewed exertions, and again issued a great number of relief tickets. No tickets are admissible unless the parties recommending have personally visited the objects of distress, and are enabled to answer the necessary questions from their own observation. This judicious arrangement does away with almost all possibility of imposition.—Many of the committee have, in the course of their visits to the abodes of the poor, witnessed such heart-rending scenes of wretchedness and distress that nothing short of ocular demonstration could have convinced them of the existence of so much misery. The suffering inmates of some of the wretched hovels on Mount Pleasant held pawnbroker's tickets for every article of furniture, bedding, and nearly the whole of their wearing apparel, and thus were they induced by the want of food to pawn their scanty clothing for momentary relief, which ultimately aggravated their suffering in a tenfold degree. We could fill many columns by narrating the scenes of wretchedness which have been communicated to us, but one must suffice. The visitors in the Mount Pleasant district discovered in an attic apartment of one of those abodes of misery, an Irishman named Barney O'Pray, who has completed his 99th year, a daughter and two grand-daughters. The old man was lying on a bundle of straw close to the slates, with nothing save a dirty quilt for a cover! The females had a similar bed in another corner of the garret. As for the house contained in the shape of human food. The old man had been confined to his bed for several days, and his daughter and grand-children had pawned every moveable article in order to procure potatoes—all they durst even venture to hope for. The above is by no means one of the worst cases that has come to our ears, and we merely selected it on account of the great age of poor unfortunate old Barney, who has been well known in the town for a great number of years. Still, after all, although many heart-rending cases have fallen under the observation of the committee, we are assured by several of the visitors that the distress is not so general as was supposed before the subscription was commenced. We may mention also, as proof that some labourers at least have not felt the pinching hand of want, otherwise they would not, as has been the case within the past week, have refused to work unless paid at the rate of 3*s.* per day—2*s.* 6*d.* were offered, but indignantly rejected. This is certainly not the way to acknowledge the kindness and good feeling that have been called into action in behalf of their fellow-labourers.—The whole proceedings of the past week reflect the greatest credit on the wealthier portion of our townsmen: the subscriptions are liberal, and the willingness with which all have lent a helping hand in the good work is a proof that where distress really exists a most anxious desire has been evinced to mitigate its severity.

