

II.

DAVID LOCH'S TOUR IN SCOTLAND IN 1778. BY SIR ARTHUR MITCHELL, K.C.B., M.D., LL.D., FOREIGN SECRETARY.

In 1778, that is, 119 years ago, David Loch wrote a book entitled—
A Tour through most of the Trading Towns and Villages of Scotland ; containing Notes and Observations concerning the Trade, Manufactures, Improvements, &c., of these Towns and Villages.

Mr Loch made this tour, and wrote an account of it, at the instance of the Hon. Board of Manufactures. No doubt he was chosen by the Board as a competent and trustworthy observer. He made his tour with a special object, that is, his observations were to lie in a particular direction. Other books by Mr Loch show that this came easily to him, and that he was well fitted for the task which he undertook.

Tours more or less of this character, made in Scotland during the

last, or early part of the present century, are somewhat numerous, and are often full of interest and instruction. The tour by Tucker is the earliest and perhaps the best ; but there are several later tours having this special character, which give much useful and curious information. Generally the limitation is self imposed—is often, indeed, the outcome unconsciously of personal tastes and aptitudes. Good observers, however, in some one direction are usually found to observe well in other directions, and records of travel by them have often much more than a special interest, though the particular objects of such travellers may give the colour and chief value to the story they tell. They desire to see certain things, and they do see them, when they are to be seen, and their story is mainly a record of these observations, though other things are also seen and recorded. The story they write thus becomes an account of how the country, which they travelled over, stood in regard to some particular matter at the date of the visit, and so it becomes possible to compare that state with the corresponding state at a later date, by which changes of much interest may be disclosed. Mr Loch's notes, for instance, concerning trade and manufactures in the small towns and villages of Scotland in 1778 reveal many curious and important changes, which are not generally realised.

He visited and made notes regarding 132 towns and villages, and I have picked out 60 of these as the subject of the following remarks. I have not exactly chosen the 60 smallest of the towns and villages, yet this is nearly the case, and I might so describe them with a close approach to accuracy. I leave out of consideration all the larger towns, such as Edinburgh, Leith, Glasgow, Paisley, Greenock, Dundee, Montrose, Dunfermline, Kirkcaldy, Aberdeen, Inverness, Hawick, etc. What Mr Loch says about trade in these larger places shows that a marvellous change has taken place in them, but my present object is to show the change which has taken place in the small towns and villages. I also omit many small towns, for the reason that Mr Loch has scarcely said anything about them.

He makes reference to Fortrose and Cromarty in Ross-shire, but no reference at all to the towns of Sutherland, Caithness, Orkney, and Shetland, nor to the towns and villages in the West Highlands and Islands.

Perth, Ayr, and Kilmarnock are perhaps the largest of the 60 towns and villages which I have selected. I have not excluded them, because some things about them are interesting, as, for instance, (1) that Perth, 119 years ago, had a silk manufactory, had 600 looms employed in making silesias and sheeting, had a prosperous shoe-market, and had a trade in gloves that was famous; (2) that Ayr had 260 looms, of which 60 were employed in silk manufacture, while a few miles south of it there were about 190 looms, 55 being "in the silk way"; and (3) that Kilmarnock had 426 looms, of which 240 were employed in weaving silk, and the rest in making serges, shalloons, duffles, blankets, carpets, and linens, had also a great manufactory of shoes all for export, carried on a thriving trade in nightcaps with Holland, and sent its manufactures to all the ports then open for trade. The lady who started the manufacture of woollens in Kilmarnock in 1728—Miss Maria Gardiner, "half aunt to the unfortunate Lord Kilmarnock"—was still alive when Loch made his tour, and we learn from him that she brought spinners and weavers from Dalkeith to teach the people of Kilmarnock. It would scarcely be to that town that one would go now in search of instructors in the arts of spinning and weaving.

In first reading Mr Loch's book, what most struck me was the change which has occurred in the small towns of the North-East of Scotland. In every one of these there was a considerable manufacture and trade in 1778. This consisted chiefly in weaving and spinning. Elgin, for instance, had about 80 looms at work, Forres 40, Nairn 46, Fochabers 50, Keith 100, Huntly 200, Cullen 120, Portsoy 30, Cromarty 61, Fortrose 32, and so on.

In an appendix to these remarks I give a short note regarding each of the 60 towns and villages, as nearly as possible in Mr Loch's own words. These notes show that weaving was far from being the only trade occupation. Spinning was, perhaps, a still more extensive employment, but it is not so easy to indicate the extent of the spinning, as it is the extent of the weaving—the latter being fairly measured by the number of looms employed. In the whole of the 60 small towns and villages there were, in those times of Home Industries, 5272 looms at work.

The materials used in weaving and spinning were wool, hemp, flax, silk, and cotton. Wool appears to have been the material chiefly used—flax and hemp following. But silk was also much used, as is shown by the fact that in the small towns, with which I am dealing, there were 754 looms employed in the manufacture of silk. Much of what was spun was sent south, largely to Nottingham, as yarn or thread.

The fabrics and objects manufactured were very varied in their character and designations. In these 60 towns and villages we hear of the manufacture of osnaburgs, shalloons, serges, duffles, dowlas, silesias, broad cloths, narrow cloths, blankets, plaids or mauds, carpets, flannels, lastings, mancoes, calimancoes, nightcaps, stockings by hand and frame, long lawn, diapers, damask, tykes, checks, plain linen, lunks, napkins, gauze lawn (flowered and striped), sheeting, inkle, canvas, sacking (for flour, bisquet, and hop bags, and for tarpaulin), tapes, silk stockings, silk knee-garters, mitts, breeches pieces, sewing thread, lace, hats, boots and shoes, nails, spades, soap, candles, and pottery.

These things were not made solely for home consumption. On the contrary, it is stated that to a very large extent they were exported to Glasgow, London, Nottingham, Darlington, Ireland, Holland, the West Indies, Halifax, Quebec, etc. Silk and flax were largely imported, and wool also to a considerable extent.

An interesting old-world picture is presented by the account of the daily waggons arriving at Selkirk with combed wool from Darlington, Manchester, Halifax, and Durham, and being loaded for the return journey with yarn spun by the people of the little Scottish town. This tells of an extensive business largely done in the homes of the people. We know, indeed, that it was very extensive, for we are told by Loch that "the number of people employed in the different branches of the woollen manufactory, in and about Haddington, was upwards of 800."

It is interesting to find Cromarty in 1778 with a large manufacture of sacking, to be spread nearly over the whole kingdom; but it is still more interesting to find that it had thriving naileries and spade manufactures. Naileries existed in some of the other small towns, as, for instance, in Pathhead, while spades and other implements for country use were extensively made at Sanquhar—"equal to any in Britain."

The lace-making at Renfrew and Hamilton seems to have been on a considerable scale. At Renfrew it is described as being after the manner of Mechlin and Brussels. It was carried on by a Mrs Pettau, whose husband was an early teacher of the art of making fine thread, in a district which has since become very famous for the thread it produces.

The dead-meat trade at Dalkeith was very extensive in 1778—100,000 sheep and 2000 black cattle, on an average, being slaughtered there annually.

It is curious to find a trade in silk stockings and in shoes for the London market in a little town as far north as Huntly, and we also find that fine silk knee-garters and mitts were made there, as well as gauze and lawn—flowered and striped.

Boots and shoes seem to have been made for export in many of the little towns, as, for instance, in Keith, Huntly, Peterhead, Dunse, Lanark, Forfar, Perth, and Kilmarnock.

The people of Gullane, Loch says, spin good yarn, and “are roused to industry by Mr and Mrs Cochran who are resident,” but rabbits formed their chief export. The water, he says, “is soft and good,” which raises a question as to the source of the supply at that time, since in our day it is notably hard.

The trade carried on in all these little towns and villages, 119 years ago, is now carried on in our large centres of population. These large cities or towns have grown vastly in population, and their manufactures and trade of all kinds have increased even more vastly. On the other hand, manufacturing, and trade that is not local, have all but ceased in the little towns and villages. This does not, however, involve their showing a diminished population. Most of them, in fact, show an increase, though the increase is very small as compared with that which has taken place in the large towns. This means that there are, in the small towns and villages of the North-East of Scotland, for example, to which reference has been made, more people now than there were in 1778, and they live without the aid of local industries, and do so, I hope, with greater ease, in more comfort, and in healthier surroundings. This may or may not be correct, but the thing that is certainly correct is that, within what may properly be called a short time, great changes

have gradually and silently taken place in these communities, that these changes are already forgotten, and that they would probably be quite unknown were it not for some such chance record as that which we have been considering. It would be futile, I think, to ask whether there is in these changes a going forward or a going back. What has happened is in no sense the work of a mysterious evolution, though it probably exhibits the operation of that law of natural selection, in which everyone believes, and which tends to the survival of the strongest. In other words, the small home industries of the small towns appear to have been killed by competition with the large industries of the great towns.

EXTRACTS FROM MR LOCH'S TOUR.

1. ELGIN.—Eighty looms are “employed in summer on the linen, and in winter on woollen.” “Here are about £15,000 sterling’s worth of yarn sold at London and Glasgow annually.”

2. FORRES.—“There is a deal of yarn spun here for sale. Here are about 40 looms, partly for woollen, and partly for linen. The Glasgow market is their chief place of sale. There is about £20,000 sterling’s worth of yarn spun here in one year from Dutch flax.”

3. NAIRN.—“There are about 46 looms employed partly on woollen and linen.”

4. FOCHABERS.—“About 50 looms employed on piece-work, woollen and linen.” “There is very good thread made here for stockings, most of which goes to Nottingham.”

5. KEITH.—“There is a great deal spun here. About 100 looms are employed in the long lawn way, woollen and coarse linen.” “Much is done in the manufacturing of shoes.”

6. HUNTLY.—“There are about 200 looms employed mostly on the long lawns, and fine linen diapers, and woollen.” “About £50,000 sterling’s worth is annually spun and manufactured here; taking all branches into the account.” “Many shoes are made for sale, which are sent to London.” “William and Alexander Forsyth make good silk stockings, from the coarse silk, which meets with ready sale. They make from the finest silk, knee-garters, mitts, and breeches-pieces. Mr Burnet manufactures brown-thread for the Nottingham market. Mr M’Vey manufactures plain linen, damask, diaper, and gauze lawn, flowered and striped. George Junken manufactures plain lawns, twisted, striped, and flowered.”

7. CULLEN.—“About 120 looms are employed mostly in coarse linen and long lawns.” “Robert Taylor has 8 frames in the stocking way.”

8. PORTSOY.—“Here are about 30 looms on long lawns, linen, and piece work, and a considerable thread manufactory for stocking-making, all of which go to Nottingham.” “Mrs Mary Robertson makes sewing-thread, and employs 6 looms on gauze and flowered-lawns.” “The importation of flax is considerable, about

4000 matts being annually brought from Holland to supply the manufactures at Huntly and the country round."

9. BANFF.—"Here is a very extensive manufacture carried on in the thread way, for stocking-making, white and brown, almost the whole of which goes to Nottingham." "George Robertson & Co. make thread to the amount of £40,000 sterling annually. They keep about 50 flax-dressers, import about 3500 matts of Dutch flax annually, pay about £70 sterling a day to spinners and all the different workpeople in that line." "Here are 28 looms employed in piece goods in the woolen and linen way."

10. PETERHEAD.—"Messrs James and Thomas Arbuthnots, junior, and Company carry on a considerable manufacture of coarse thin woolen stuffs, serges, calimancoes, shalloons, etc., to the amount of £50 sterling a-week." "Shoes are likewise made here for exportation. Messrs Kilgours, at Nether Kimmundie, manufacture, at an average weekly, 33 pieces of woolen cloth, of 26 yards each; they may amount in value to about £60 sterling."

11. ELLON.—"Here much is done in the knitting of stockings. About £100 sterling per week is paid by the Aberdeen merchants for this article alone." "Four looms are employed."

12. CROMARTY.—"A large manufacture for making sacking of the best kind, for flour sacks, and such other uses." "Here are 61 looms employed all in making from hemp yarn (for they use no flax) sacking of different fabrics for flour bags, bisquet bags, wool sacks, hop bags, hammock stuff, and tarpaulin stuff, and coarse stuffs for packages of every kind." "Here are two naileries and spade manufactures and both are very well employed."

13. FORTROSE.—"Here there is a deal of linen yarn spun for sale; there are 32 looms employed, about half in the coarse woolen and linen."

14. PERTH.—"A silk manufactory is here established by Mr Gloag, a sedate, sensible, enterprising man." "The skimmers and glovers here are famous in their several branches of business." "The shoe-market or manufactory is in a prosperous way." "There are about 600 looms; the half of which is at present employed in silesias; the other in weaving sheeting, linen and woolen."

15. DUNKELD.—"There are at present about 100 looms employed on the woolen and linen branches, and a great deal of yarn spun, great part of which goes to London unmanufactured." "Here are three tanneries, and a considerable quantity of shoes are made, for which they have a brisk demand."

16. SELKIRK.—"William Roger employs 8 large looms in the inkle manufacture, and has a great demand for that commodity. He makes broad and narrow tapes." "It is a thriving manufacture, and receives great encouragement from England." "There come down to this place considerable quantities of combed wool from Darlington, Manchester, Halifax, and Durham, daily by waggons, which is spun into yarn, and returned by the same conveyance. The sum paid weekly for spinning this wool may be about £55 sterling."

17. PEBBLES. "Fifty looms employed weaving camblets, shalloons, and such sort of goods." "Here there are 40 looms employed, mostly in the blankets, stuffs, coarse cloths, and duffles."

18. DUNSE.—"There are at present 80 looms employed in the winter on the woolen, and in the summer on the linen manufactures." "There are about 300 pairs of shoes made here weekly for the Edinburgh and Glasgow markets."

19. KELSO.—"Here there are 70 looms employed in the woolen and linen."

"The weavers here make 70 yards of flannel in two weeks on 2 looms occupied by a man and a boy." "They bring drest flax from Darlington and other places in Yorkshire, to be spun, then return it by land carriage to be manufactured."

20. JEDBURGH.—"Here there are 56 looms."

21. DRYBURGH.—"There are 11 looms all in the woolen business."

22. MELROSE.—"Here there are about 140 looms—mostly in the woolen."

23. MOFFAT.—"Thomas, John, and Adam Reids at Moffat give an account of a particular kind of goods, made at this place, which are sold on the English side, and the demand is so great that it cannot be answered." "They also manufacture plaids or mauds, and blankets to a great extent, of which article they made 3000 yards last year. There is another article they manufacture, called checked serge. It is made into hunting coats, a light garb for summer wear, and answers very well for children's cloathes. They also make lastings, mancoes, flannels, and serges, which are mostly exported into Holland." "Here are about 50 looms all in the woolen branches. Serges, shalloons, duffles, blankets, coarse cloths of all denominations."

24. DALKEITH.—"The wool brought into Dalkeith in the year 1776 is about 7200 stons, tron weight, value £3240 sterling; of which there is exported about 6500 stons; so that there remains about 700 stons of said wool to be manufactured in Dalkeith and its neighbourhood, which is chiefly made into broad-cloths, from 4s. to 14s. per yard; narrow cloths from 1s. 6d. to 6s. per yard; the amount of the value of the whole manufactured woollen goods is computed to be about £3000 annually. Their chief markets are Edinburgh and Glasgow, and some to the north and south." "There are carpets made here of different patterns and pieces." "There are slaughtered in Dalkeith, at a medium, in one year, 100,000 sheep and lambs and about 2000 black cattle." "George Hislop, hat maker here, is a considerable dealer, and makes excellent goods."

25. HADDINGTON.—In 1776 "about 5000 stons of wool, tron weight, manufactured in Haddington and its neighbourhood, value £2500, chiefly made into broad cloths, narrow cloths, and blankets." "The value of the goods, made in and about this place, is computed to about £5000 sterling annually." "The number of people supposed to be employed in different branches of the woolen manufactory, in and about Haddington, is reckoned to be upwards of 800."

26. DUNBAR.—"Mrs Robert Fall employs many people in the spinning of wool, and in manufacturing it into carpets and other goods." "Sixty looms to manufacture canvas of all sorts."

27. FALKIRK.—"There are about 120 looms here."

28. LINLITHGOW.—"Messrs Henry Gilfillan & Co. manufacture about 1000 stons (of wool) into carpets annually, sold mostly abroad." "About 48 looms employed in different branches of the woolen manufactory, and 8 looms in the carpet manufactory. There are 9 frames for stocking-makers."

29. KIRKLISTON.—"Alexander Fleming carries on a considerable linen manufactory, and employs about 20 looms."

30. STIRLING.—"This town has long carried on a very extensive trade, in manufacturing shalloons and serges, Highland plaids, and carpets," for which last "demands are great at home, as well as from England, Ireland, and Holland." "Here are about 160 looms, 30 stocking frames, and 17 carpet looms."

31. CULROSS.—"There are here about 35 looms employed in the linen and cotton branches."

32. **PATHHEAD.**—"The manufacture of nails is carried on here to a great extent." "Here there are about 195 looms employed in manufacturing checks, tykes, napkins, and plain linen, all much in demand."

33. **DYSART.**—"There are about 130 looms."

34. **COLLINGSBURGH.**—"There are about 8 looms; a great deal of yarn is spun in and about this village."

35. **KILCONQUHAR.**—"About 30 looms are employed in piece work."

36. **St MONANCE.**—"There are 20 looms, all employed."

37. **PITTENWEEM.**—"Here there are about 20 looms, and spinning is carried on very briskly."

38. **E. & W. ANSTRUTHER.**—"There are about 36 looms in both towns." "A considerable thread manufactory is carried on. Their thread is much approved of—all coloured threads."

39. **CRAIL.**—"A great deal of yarn is spun." "Seventy-four looms in this town and Kingsbarns"—"mostly in the linen way and osnaburgs."

40. **St ANDREWS.**—"Here are about 42 looms, just now all well employed, mostly in plain coarse linens."

41. **AUCHTERMUCHTY.**—"A good deal of coarse yarn is spun here; about 80 looms; a constant sale of coarse linens, about 30 pieces a day, 35 inches wide, and 80 yards long."

42. **STRATHMIGLOW.**—"There are about 33 looms employed." "A considerable quantity of ounce threads for the London market, frequently to the amount of 9000 spyndles in one year."

43. **KINROSS.**—"About 140 looms employed, partly in thin silesias and partly in brown linens."

44. **SOUTH-FERRY.**—"There are about 20 looms—mostly in the linen way." "There are hard soap and candles made, of good quality."

45. **ATHELSTANEFORD.**—"David Stewart has 6 looms well employed. He weaves table linen, raised and plain, equal to any in this country." "There are 6 looms more, much in the same line."

46. **PRESTONPANS, AND PORT-SETON.**—"Two potteries—employ above 100 people. They make all sorts of the stone and flint kinds, both white and yellow, as is made at Stafford, as good in quality and full as good for the money." "Here are 20 looms."

47. **CARNWATH.**—"Thirteen looms." "Napkins are made here, low priced for country sale."

48. **LANARK.**—"Here there is a considerable manufacture of shoes and boots, mostly for the Glasgow market." "About 120 people employed in this branch." "Ninety-three looms, mostly in the brown linen way." "There is likewise a thread manufactory, for making white threads."

49. **HAMILTON.**—"There are about 110 looms, chiefly employed in working lunks, that is, linen warp and cotton waft." "The lace manufactory goes on with success and spirit."

50. **RUTHERGLEN.**—"Here there are about 130 looms, mostly in the check and long lawn way."

51. **RENFREW.**—"Mrs Pettau carries on a lace manufactory, after the manner of Mechlin and Brussels in Flanders." "Sixty looms are employed in the silk way, and 40 in long lawns and plain linen."

52. **WHITBURN AND BATHGATE.**—"There are 27 looms employed." "About the same number of looms at Bathgate."

53. KILMARNOCK.—“240 looms are employed in weaving silk; 66 in the carpet way; 40 in the linen branches; 30 for blankets; 30 for serges and shallons; and 20 for duffles.” “There are 6 frames for making stockings.” “Kilmarnock nightcaps are a good article for the Holland market.” “A great quantity of shoes are manufactured here, all for export.” They send their goods to “the West Indies, Halifax, Quebec, and all the ports that are at present open for trade.” “The woolen manufacture was introduced by Miss Maria Gardiner (half aunt to the unfortunate Lord Kilmarnock), who, observing the indolence of the people of that place, brought spinners and weavers of carpets from Dalkeith about the year 1728. From that time the woolen manufacture has been carried to a considerable extent: the lady is still alive” (1778).

54. IRVINE.—“There are 10 frames for stockings, 45 linen looms, and 40 looms in the silk way.”

55. KILWINNING.—“There are at present 99 looms employed in silk, 40 in linen and woolen.”

56. SALTCOATS.—“There are 200 looms employed in the silk manufacture, in and about this place, and about 40 looms in the linen branch.”

57. AYR.—Looms for woollen and linen are about 200, “and those employed in silk are about 60.” “A few miles south of Ayr there are 55 looms in the silk way.” “There are here about 190 looms, with 15 stocking frames.”

58. SANQUHAR.—“There are about 30 looms, all employed in the woolen way.” “Here are 5 frames in the stocking way.” “A tilt mill is erected here for making spades, and all such implements for country use, in the iron way, equal to any in Britain.”

59. DUMFRIES.—“There are 21 looms now employed in the linen branch, 2 making carpets, and 30 frames in manufacturing stockings.”

60. GULLANE.—“Spin good yarn.” People “roused to industry by Mr and Mrs Cochran, who are resident.” The water is “soft and good.” Rabbits form the chief export.