

WATER  
FOR  
MANCHESTER  
FROM  
THIRLMERE.

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THE  
MANCHESTER AND THIRLMERE  
SCHEME:

A N A P P E A L

TO THE PUBLIC  
ON THE FACTS OF THE CASE.

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ONE PENNY.  
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MANCHESTER: JOHN HEYWOOD.  
WINDERMERE: J. GARNETT.  
LONDON: SIMPKIN, MARSHALL & Co.

I have been induced to take the responsibility of issuing this statement and appeal by several gentlemen, whose opinions on the project are similar to my own, and who are agreed that the thing most necessary, in the first instance, is that some one should move in the matter; and that, if the facts are once fairly brought before the public, the joint action of a large and influential body of persons will easily be secured.

R. SOMERVELL.

## THE THIRLMERE WATER SCHEME.

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[The following is the substance, slightly modified for the present publication, of a letter which appeared some weeks ago in the local papers. For suggestions as to practical steps which may now, or shortly, be taken, see page 16.]

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It is now very generally known that the Corporation of Manchester have determined to apply for an Act, during the session of 1878, by which they will be enabled to convert Thirlmere Lake into a reservoir; and, by means of a tunnel through Dunmail Raise, and a covered aqueduct thence to Manchester, to obtain an increased supply of water for the use of that town and its neighbourhood.

In many cases, landowners whose property, and other persons whose business, will be injuriously affected by undertakings such as this, are the only parties whose interests require much attention; but, in this respect, the scheme now under consideration seems to be entirely exceptional.

Englishmen generally have a direct interest in the preservation of the natural beauties of our mountain districts, the value of which increases year by year with our increasing population, and the consequent rapid appropriation of the general surface of the land to purely utilitarian purposes. On this ground, it has been thought desirable to call the attention of the public generally, and especially that part of

it which is accustomed, more or less, to frequent the Lake District, to what is now going on.

As a general principle, it may be conceded that a sufficient supply of water for the inhabitants of large towns, has, of late years, been recognised as a matter of such importance that considerations of taste and sentiment, or individual preference, must not be allowed to stand in the way of arrangements proved to be necessary for attaining the object; but Parliament has wisely decided that, before the necessary powers are granted, an opportunity shall be offered for canvassing each scheme on its own merits, and as to its bearings on public and private interests generally.

Among the points to be considered in this connection, the following may be enumerated: 1st. In what capacity do the parties, claiming extraordinary powers, come forward? (For example, a local government of any kind, acting as a Board of Health, and being responsible as such for the sanitary condition of a town, has, *prima facie*, a different standing to a mere Water Company, however useful the ends sought by the latter may be). 2nd. Is the need of an increased water supply for the particular town, or district, an urgent one? 3rd. Is the source from whence it is proposed to obtain such increased supply the only one available? or, is there no other source whence an adequate supply can be obtained, at a smaller sacrifice of public and private interests?

A statement of the position of the Corporation of Manchester, as purveyors of water, may throw some light on these questions.

In the first place, in official statements put forth by the Waterworks Committee, no attempt is made to disguise the

fact that, whether with a profitable result or not, the Corporation was, several years ago, acting far more as a great Water Company than as a Board of Health.

There is no doubt that at the present time this is still more decidedly their position, and that any increase to present supplies will lead them still further in the same direction.

In a report dated June, 1875, Mr. J. F. Bateman, the Engineer, says "The foregoing facts shew that the great increase, both for domestic and trade supply, is taking place outside the City, and it is these districts which not only help the Corporation to pay the costs of the undertakings, but it is there that the surplus profit is made."

In the year 1874 they had already provided an ample supply of excellent water for their own city, and for the neighbouring borough of Salford. In addition to this, they have voluntarily undertaken to supply various townships and villages, some ten, twelve, and fourteen miles distant. Figures taken from their official reports, show the proportion of revenue received for the different services.

*As a Board of Health*, collected, in the year 1874, for Water used and supplied within the limits of Manchester and Salford:—

Public rate ... ..	£22,468
Domestic rate ... ..	24,197
Salford ... ..	6,500

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£53,165

*As a Water Company*; sold, }  
 for Domestic use beyond } £102,268  
 such limits, and for Trade }  
 purposes generally ... .. }

It will be observed that the above figures are from the profit and loss account for 1874.

The Engineer states the average quantity supplied per day during that year at 16,713,957 gallons, and gives it as his opinion that when works already in progress are completed, 25,000,000 gallons may be reckoned on, or 8,000,000 gallons in addition to present supplies. So far as quantities of water can be taken as indicated by amounts of money received in the two cases, the account seems to stand thus :—

	Gallons.
Supplied for Sanitary and Domestic purposes, within the Boroughs of Manchester and Salford, per day ... ..	5,741,000
Supplied for Trade purposes, and to Outsiders, per day, ... ..	11,044,000

Hence it will be seen that if the Corporation will only refrain from extending their present large business as a Water Company, the additional supply already arranged for is considerably larger than the total quantity used for sanitary and domestic purposes within the two Boroughs, during the year 1874.

Any discrepancy which may exist between the proportionate quantities of water furnished, and money values in the two cases, will simply indicate the amount of profit which the Corporation has already made by its dealings with outsiders.

The inference, from these facts, is inevitable; that home wants being already provided for, both for the present and for an indefinite future, the intention is to sell the Thirlmere water to other parties, at a profit. If the project succeed, the borough Water rate may, in the first



instance, be extinguished, and anything accruing beyond this may be devoted, like the profits of Gas making, to City improvements.

Much has been said and written about the responsibility attaching to the authorities of Manchester, in relation to this matter. In the actual position of affairs, it is not easy to see what responsibility attaches to them, beyond that of a tradesman who finds the demand for his goods increasing, and consequently feels bound to lay in a larger stock.

The Corporation of Manchester are no more bound to provide water for all the neighbouring country, than they are bound to provide for the disposal of its sewage.

One cannot help suspecting that this sense of obligation has, at least, been quickened by the expectation of substantial advantage to be obtained in connection with the fulfilment of it.

It may therefore be safely asserted, firstly, that it is as a Water Company, and not as a Board of Health, that the Corporation will now apply for powers to appropriate Thirlmere Lake, and to construct the necessary subsidiary works. Secondly, that, as of the water now supplied nearly two-thirds appear to go for manufacturing purposes, and to distant places, and as an additional supply is already arranged for, beyond any possible increased demand for Board of Health purposes within the two Boroughs, it cannot be said that the sanitary needs of their own City are urgent.

Then there remains the question—Is there no locality from which increased supplies can be obtained, with less sacrifice of important public and private interests? To obtain a supply of water for a populous district, is almost

always a troublesome and expensive business ; but it can hardly be denied that there are few districts in England so favourably placed, in this respect, as South Lancashire.

The moorland region, which stretches continuously from the river Lune, near Lancaster, quite into the northern part of Derbyshire and Staffordshire, is, at its nearest point, not more than seven miles distant from Manchester ; and in this wide range of country there are numerous glens, growing nothing but heather, and having ample gathering grounds in connection with them, from which, an almost unlimited supply of excellent water can be obtained, when needed ; whilst local and private interests may be reconciled without any extraordinary difficulty. The preference for Thirlmere appears to be induced by the expectation of avoiding a certain amount of expense and trouble, and, perhaps, by a sort of ambition, or fancy for heroic measures, on the part of certain individuals.

It is highly probable that, in the localities above referred to, the water must be collected in smaller quantities than may be obtained from Thirlmere, and that the same expense and trouble which Boards of Health usually meet with in transactions of this nature, will have to be met, in dealing with parties interested.

These circumstances might make it unprofitable for a Water Company to have recourse to such sources of supply ; but this seems a reason why the Corporation should be satisfied with the business they are at present doing in this line, rather than that they should invade places one hundred miles distant from their town, and make their rates responsible for the interest of an enormous addition to their debt, for the sake of extending operations which certainly are not their proper business, as Trustees for the Ratepayers of Manchester.

A passage in the Engineer's report, which bears strongly on this aspect of the question, is one in which he states that in the position which the Corporation have assumed, "an addition of 6,000,000 gallons per day is not worth considering;" a quantity, nevertheless, equal to the total consumption for sanitary and domestic purposes in the two Boroughs during 1874, if money values correspond with quantities.

Then, to look at the other side of the question: the example of Lock Katrine, the water of which has been conveyed to Glasgow, is quoted, to show that little injury to the picturesque need be feared, from turning Lake Thirlmere into a reservoir; but it is to be noted that the level of Loch Katrine has been little, if at all, raised. The lake has *not* been converted into a reservoir, but simply used as one; whereas, to obtain anything like the supply from Thirlmere, calculated upon by the Corporation, and which would alone justify the large outlay involved in the scheme, the level of that lake must be greatly raised in winter, and, in dry seasons, must be reduced in proportion.

Now, everyone acquainted with Thirlmere knows that the western bank is, beyond comparison, the most beautiful shore of the Lake District; and, that to raise or drop the level of the water, even twenty or thirty feet, would utterly mar the whole effect. The mountains would remain, but the Lake would, for centuries, be simply an artificial reservoir.

From the configuration of the neighbouring hills, the gathering ground of this Lake is exceptionally small, and, from this cause, a copious supply for the dry season can only be secured by extensive storage. The Engineer gives the present area of the Lake as 335 acres, and states that it will be necessary to increase it to 700 acres, in order to obtain

the water needed. There can be little doubt that powers will be sought to carry the extension still further, if this can be done with a profitable result. The full significance of this change may not, at first sight, be recognised by every one. There can be no object in raising the level of the Lake, or in extending its area, but that of creating a reserve during the wet season, to be drawn upon in summer. At that season then, when the District is visited by Tourists, the Lake will be reduced to its old dimensions, and for every acre of water remaining, there will be an equal extent of mud and rotting water-weeds, or of desolate stony ground, like the bed of an Italian river, which will form a margin to the lake, round its whole circumference; and this to replace the present shore, which nature has been beautifying for centuries, and harmonizing, by means of moss and lichen, and varied herbage, with the watery surface within, and the rocks and hills without.

It is very easy to sneer at opposition to such schemes as this, calling it sentimental and selfish, but, even if it be conceded that no considerations are valid, the worth of which cannot be estimated in £ s. d., it can easily be shown that, tried by this test, the charms, for the effacement of which this scheme is a bold initiatory step, are of no trifling value. We have no *price-current* for the beauties with which God has clothed our world, but the immense sums which people, of all degrees and classes, spend every year, to procure for themselves, in one way or other, the enjoyment which these beauties (or often the most feeble imitation of them) can afford, would be sufficient, one would think, in itself, to prove to the most unsentimental mind, that the best and rarest materials for such enjoyments are very far from worthless. In this market we have buyers, and no sellers; and, in the present case, the fact is unfortunate.

Were the sums annually expended by Lake Tourists alone, paid, as entrance fees, into the hands of a particular class of showmen, we should have, at once, a powerful "interest" ready to tell us what valuable pecuniary considerations were sacrificed by anything which marred the face of nature.

It now seems pretty certain that this scheme will be prosecuted by the Manchester Corporation with a vigour proportionate to the boldness with which it has been announced. This makes it most desirable that all such as feel an interest in the matter, on public grounds, should join with those who are personally and locally concerned, in making a strong and unmistakable protest against any needless tampering with the natural beauties of the English Lake District; and against the granting, by Parliament, of any power to do so, without a careful consideration of the case, in all its bearings; and, that not even the plea of sanitary benefit should enable a Corporation, or Board, to appropriate to themselves this or that Lake, as may suit their private taste or convenience. There should be a proved necessity, both as regards the want to be supplied, and the impossibility of supplying it in a less objectionable manner, before this is allowed.

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No apology is needed for bringing under the notice of those who visit and love the Lake District a matter so nearly concerning them as the proposal now made by the authorities of Manchester, — to turn the beautiful valley of Wythburn into a vast reservoir. The leading facts of the case are succinctly stated in the letter now reprinted. Here it is only needful to notice a few details of the scheme

which have been divulged since it was written; and to state the general grounds upon which the opponents of the scheme appeal to the public for support.

In the first place it now seems tolerably certain that powers will be sought to raise the maximum level of the lake 35 or 40 feet; and that therefore not only the 'City of Wythburn,' but every feature of the lovely shore will be submerged. This is to be accomplished by the erection of a huge embankment at the northern end of the lake, now one of the sweetest glens in Cumberland. The old coach-road, with its familiar windings along the shore, will be put under water for miles; and in its place we are promised 'a straight road cut on a level line' along the hill-side. Nor is this all. The maximum level of the lake, to whatever height it be raised, can only be maintained in the winter months. What will the valley look like in a dry summer, when the level has been lowered by the fair weather of May and June, and acres of slimy bank are laid bare? Even those who have no eye for the loveliness that is to be destroyed, may be disgusted with the *unloveliness* that is to be created; and will then, too late, regret having been duped by the absurd statement, that 'nothing will be done that can injure the scenery.'\*

It might be supposed that with such facts before them, all parties would agree that, should this project be carried out, the beauty of this charming lake will be completely

\* This argument, wild as it must appear to those who care for the beauty of Nature, is being freely used to silence opposition in Manchester. The Water Committee state it as their opinion, in their official report, that the beauty of the lake will be 'enhanced' by the carrying out of the proposed works!

destroyed ;— the only question being whether the sacrifice is necessary. Such, however, is not the case. On the contrary, there appear to be not a few people who can contemplate the proposed changes without a shadow of regret ; who can see no charm in the shore — fashioned and fitted by the mighty but gentle changes of ages to be the setting of its gem-like mere — the loss of which would not be abundantly compensated by the creation of a bigger sheet of water ; and who fancy that Mr. Bateman's embankment, when 'sprinkled with a few boulders,' will form a charming adjunct, and possibly attractive rival, to Raven Crag.

With persons of this temper it would obviously be hopeless to argue : to show them the transcending loveliness of Nature would be about as easy as to prove, off hand, the greatness of Shakespeare to a man who can 'see nothing in him.' The expressed opinions of such people so plainly manifest their incompetence to form a right judgment of the matter that they are not likely to have much weight with thoughtful persons. These will ask themselves whether it be wise, except under the compulsion of inevitable necessity to mar the face of Nature, in a district the loveliness of which has a value to the Nation at large, exceeding a hundredfold the commercial price of its surface.

There are several considerations which should weigh with us in pronouncing an opinion. In the first place, we have to consider, not ourselves only, but the interests of those who will come after us. The sentiment of beauty in Nature, and the love of mountain scenery, have been much developed of late years, and are likely to increase in power and importance. Much that is hurtful and destructive has been done, both to Nature and Art, in the hurry and excitement

of this age of mechanical enterprise; and the cheering revival of some consideration for the beautiful — though too often misdirected — makes it certain that such scenes of natural grandeur or loveliness as are still unspoiled, will be doubly dear to the next generation. When we see our large towns beginning to vie with one another in the formation of parks, and the preservation of open spaces; when we learn how eagerly the consolations of Nature — though but a few flowers, a simple creeper, or a tiny plot of garden — are prized in the dark places of our cities; when we see every one, from the labourer who rears a solitary window plant, to the man who can spend his thousands on a country home, striving to obtain, at cost, some elements of beauty in their surroundings; above all, when we remember that the possibilities of enjoying natural scenery are being every year curtailed; we must surely feel that nothing short of a cogent and inevitable necessity must exist, before the people of this country suffer the spoiling of their free and birthright inheritance in the loveliness of this Cumberland valley.

It cannot be shown that, in the present case, any such necessity exists. Upon her own estimate, Manchester requires, for herself and the places she supplies, 16,000,000 gallons of water daily; and can command a daily supply of 24,000,000 gallons.

And though it is possible that Manchester may put forward the requirements of neighbouring towns, as a reason for herself undertaking the profitable supply of their necessities, it will be felt, I think, that the promoters of this speculation should not be allowed to carry it out at Thirlmere, unless they can prove to the satisfaction of Parliament, and of the country, — not only that the necessity which they



allege really exists,—but that it is absolutely and unconditionally impossible to meet it in any other way.

This, no one can seriously maintain. Situated as Manchester is, there is no lack of alternatives; and to make wise and deliberate choice among them, will be the duty of her citizens, numbers of whom would, no doubt, warmly resent being supposed favourable to the desecration of Thirlmere.

It is evident enough, from official statements, as well as from some gushing utterances which accompanied the announcement of the scheme, that Thirlmere has been chosen because it is expected to yield a large daily supply of water, at a cost considerably below the price of that which is obtained from Longdendale; and because the surplus profit will form a large annual revenue for the benefit of the city. It is equally certain that, from a public point of view, the choice is a most unfortunate one. There is hardly another lake which would be so utterly ruined by its conversion to this use; and, lying, as it does, not in an out-of-the-way valley where it may be avoided, but on the great highway of the district, the deformity will be thrust upon every traveller, and cannot be escaped from.

It is for Parliament to decide whether a municipal body should be allowed to embark in a vast commercial undertaking of the kind; but the country at large has an undoubted right to insist that its interest in the beauty of the valley shall not be quietly sacrificed to the reduction of the Manchester rates.

The grounds of our opposition to this scheme are already, I trust, made sufficiently intelligible. It remains now for all who share our views to bestir themselves

promptly and vigorously, so as to secure the dissemination of a full knowledge of the question, and such a powerful representation of the National view of the subject as shall ensure the withdrawal, or the rejection, of the scheme.

Now, as to what is to be done. The immediate need is that all who can help in any way, by circulating this paper; by signing a petition when the time comes; or, by obtaining the signatures of others, should be brought into communication. To this end those who are disposed are earnestly and respectfully invited to send their names and addresses, (adding the parliamentary constituency in which they live) by post card or otherwise, to the undersigned. Persons so doing will receive prompt information as to any step that is taken.

Names to be sent to R. Somervell, Hazelthwaite, Windermere.

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WINDERMERE: PRINTED BY J. GARNETT.