

## BOTHIES AND FEEING MARKETS.

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THE Bothie System and the Feeing Market are social arrangements well known in Aberdeenshire. Different opinions are entertained as to their advantages and disadvantages; some thinking them highly beneficial, and others exceedingly injurious, to society. In these circumstances, we consider that an impartial enquiry into their nature and results would be interesting and important. The Bothie System, say some, is good, because it tends to elevate the moral and intellectual character of the working men. Others say that it is pernicious, because it has quite a contrary effect. It is said by one party that the Feeing Markets afford the easiest and best way of forming engagements between master and servant. It is alleged by another, that they foster a restless spirit of change, and make the contract of service one purely of money, independent altogether of character. Upon these conflicting opinions we shall endeavour to throw some light.

The Bothie is a hut or house, apart from the farm house, in which the male unmarried servants are lodged. Its accommodation depends upon the liberality of the farmer and the number of inmates. From two to eight men may be lodged in one Bothie. There are about 120 Bothies in the County, inhabited by about 550 men, giving an average of nearly five men to each Bothie. In some places the Bothie-men have the assistance of a female servant to dress their victuals, make the beds, and clean the apartment; but in general all these operations are performed by the Bothie-men themselves. Where the former plan is followed, the Bothie is much better regulated, and much more cleanly kept, than where the latter is pursued. From the report of parties who have inspected every Bothie in the County, it appears that, in general, they are in a state of great uncleanness; and, when not properly superintended, profane swearing and licentious language are frequently indulged in. And how can it be otherwise? Half-a-dozen young men, at a Whitsunday or Martinmas Term, are brought together from different parts of the County—strangers, it may be, to each other—without any natural ties of affection, mutual sympathy, or good will. Some of them well disposed, cleanly in their habits, and trained to a love of the truth as it is in Jesus; others false-hearted, selfish, and filthy. How can these associate together? The good principles and good habits of the one are apt to be overborne by the vicious principles and abominable habits of the other, and the Bothie becomes the scene of moral and physical depravity. The winter evenings are spent in lewd or ribald jesting—every social and sacred feeling is held in derision. If the inmates have rendered the required service during the day, the master takes no oversight of their evenings' occupation; and too often plans of wanton and malicious mischief are devised, the perpetration and detection of which bring upon the parties punishment and disgrace. But, compelled to dispense with female assistance in the preparation of their food and arranging of their apartments, and forbidden to hold social intercourse with the female servants in the kitchen, the Bothie-men become independent of womanly aid, and, the "helpmate meet for man," according to the original purpose of the Almighty, has no place, according to this system. She becomes either a spy or a paramour. In the former character if she looks into the Bothie, it is to discover the nakedness of the land, or see if any lost or mislaid article be