

SCHEME FOR A NAVIGABLE RIVER TO DURHAM.

THE draft¹ of an Act (*temp.* Geo. II.) for Improving the Navigation of the River Wear, and making and continuing the same river navigable from Mr. Allen's staith up to the city of Durham, is submitted to the notice of the Society.

It recites the Act of 3 Geo. I. for the improvement of the river and port and haven of Sunderland, whereby a commission was appointed for 21 years with these limits:—From the promontory or point called Souter point, about two miles from Sunderland Barr towards the N.E., and so into the sea to five fathoms at low water, and from thence in a supposed direct line till it fall opposite to that land called Ryhope Dean, about two miles from Sunderland Barr towards the S., and continuing W. from the said barr and limits up the river to a place called Newbridge, par. Chester-le-Street, and thence to the city of Durham. Tolls were to be levied from 24 June, 1717; those arising by coals and cinders brought to the river below the Newbridge to be applied only to that part of the stream; those arising by coals and cinders loaded or unloaded above the Newbridge to be applied only towards making the river navigable between that point and the city of Durham. Recitals follow to the effect that, notwithstanding the above Act, the Wear is not navigable higher than Mr. Allen's staiths, below the Newbridge, and that the tolls to be levied below Newbridge would not suffice to carry navigation further. Shoals and sands must be removed, cuts for the passage of water below Newbridge, and locks, dams, sluices and cuts for the passage above and near it up to Durham, are required. Navigation to the city will benefit trade and the poor, will greatly encourage the woollen manufactory in the city, and be convenient for the carriage of lead, coals, lime, stone, timber, deals, butter, tallow, &c., to and from Durham, Westmoreland, Cumberland, Yorkshire, and other counties, to and from Sunderland, London, and other parts, British and Foreign, and will very much tend to the employing and increase of watermen and seamen, and be a means to preserve the highways. The Mayor and Aldermen of the city of Durham have proposed to carry out the work to accommodate boats and vessels of twenty tons burden or more. It is now enacted that the Mayor and Aldermen shall be a Corporation by the name of the Mayor and Aldermen of the city of Durham, and have a common seal, and very extensive powers for altering and deepening the river are then given to them. No ground except mansion-houses, out-

¹ Communicated by Mr. John Ventress.

houses, and gardens, are safe from interference. The first lock or dam is to be at or near Newbridge, in Mr. Mascall's ground. The Act of 3 Geo. I. as relates to the limits of this Act is repealed. The commissioners must not touch existing ballast quays, wharfs, or coal staithes, otherwise than by imposing penalties for nonrepair. Tolls are given to them, but not to affect Henry Lambton of Lambton, Esq., his heirs or assigns, for coals or cinders gotten out of his estates at Lambton or Harra-ton, and laid on his staithes within the limits of the Act. Winches or or other engines may be erected to draw vessels. Passages over the towing-paths, cuts, &c., to be made for convenient occupation of the adjoining lands, and bridges, fords, highways, &c., not to be destroyed until substitutes are made. Provisions occur against leaving open the "locks or cloughs" to be made in the cuts, which in dry seasons may prejudice the mills and works upon the river. [The passage is mentioned in consequence of this sense of the word clough being altogether omitted in our local and archaic glossaries. "The clough" at Thirsk is the place where the waste waters of the Codbeck throw themselves over a dam, being regulated by a screw upon the mill-race which there separates from the old course. On the Wear works, the boatmen, as soon as their vessel had passed the lock were "to shut the said lock, and the gates and cloughs thereof."] Rights of fishing and fowling are reserved, and pleasure boats are to have free passage through the locks though not paying toll. Lords of manors and owners of riverside lands may erect warehouses, weighbeams, cranes, keys, landing places or wharfs, on their own wastes or grounds upon the river or cuts, and levy rates for themselves.

The scheme shared the fate of many other fantasies of corporate bodies, and Durham is yet free from vessels of burden. "Mr. Allen" was Thomas Allan, Esq., of Allan's Flatts, near Chester-le-Street. See the pedigrees of Allan of Blackwell, &c., in Hist. Darlington.