

other roads at that period ; and the towns of Tain, Dornoch, Dingwall, Campbelton, and Fortrose, with the seats of numerous proprietors, are situated on their shores. The bold and original plan of the young trader, therefore, was to render Cromarty a sort of depot for the whole ; to furnish the shopkeepers of the several towns with the commodities in which they dealt, and to bring to the very doors of the proprietors the various foreign articles of comfort and luxury with which commerce could alone supply them. And, launching boldly into the speculation at a time when the whole country seemed asleep around him, he purchased a freighting-boat for the navigation of the three friths, and hired a large sloop for trading with Holland and the commercial towns of the south.

The failure of the herring trade of the place had been occasioned by the disappearance of the herrings, which, after frequenting the Frith in immense shoals for a long series of years, had totally deserted it. It is quite according to the nature of the fish, however, to resume their visits as suddenly and unexpectedly as they have broken them off, though not until after the lapse of so many seasons, perhaps, that the fishermen have ceased to watch for their appearance in their old haunts, or provide the tackle necessary for their capture ; and in this way a number of years are sometimes suffered to pass, after the return of the fish, ere the old trade is re-established. To guard against any such waste of opportunity on the part of his townspeople was the first care of William Forsyth, after creating, as it were, a new and busy trade for himself ; and, representing the case to the more intelligent gentlemen of the district, and some of the wealthier merchants of Inverness, he succeeded in forming them into a society for the encouragement of the herring-fishery, which provided a yearly pre-