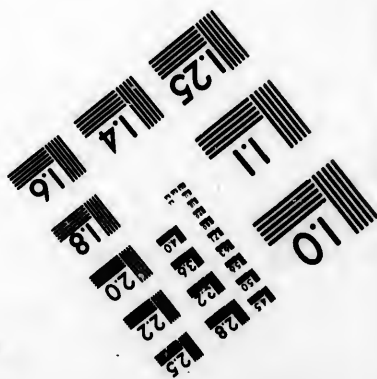
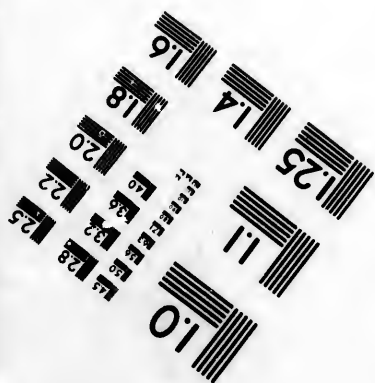
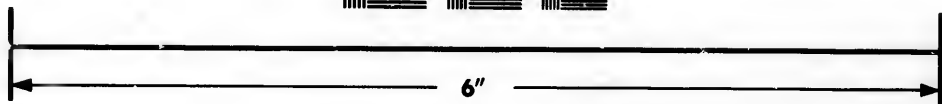
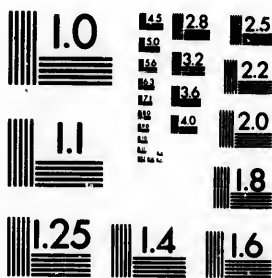


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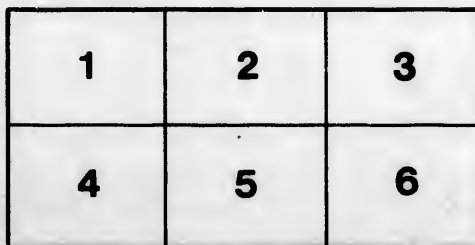
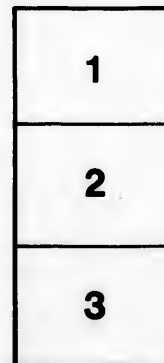
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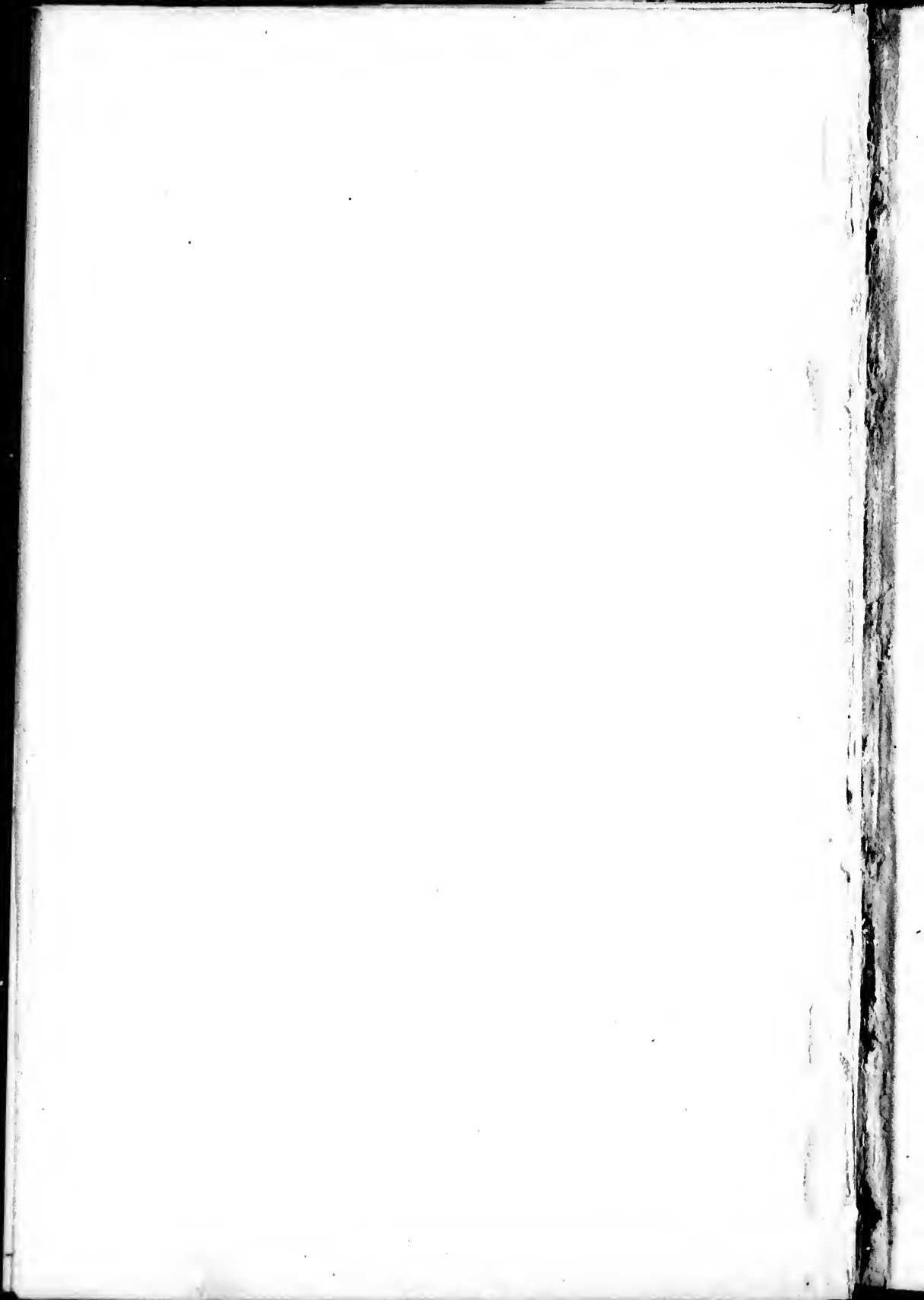
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A

LETTER

ON THE

Distresses of the Country;

addressed to

HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS

THE DUKE OF KENT,

in consequence of his Motion respecting

“ The Revulsion of Trade, and our sudden Transition from a system
of extensive War to a state of Peace; ”

IN WHICH THE SUPPOSED

INFLUENCE OF OUR DEBT AND TAXES,

UPON OUR

Manufactures and Foreign Trade,

IS INVESTIGATED.

By JOHN ASHTON YATES.

“ Therefore beware how you impawn our State,

“ How you awake the sleeping Sword of War ;

“ In the most awful name of God ! take heed.”—*Shak.*

SECOND EDITION.

LONDON,

PUBLISHED BY LONGMAN, HURST, REES, ORME, AND BROWN ;

And may be had of the principal Booksellers in the Kingdom.

PRICE FIVE SHILLINGS.

1817.

J. & J. Smith, Printers, Liverpool.

“ With thy wisdom, and with thine understanding, thou hast gotten thee
“ Riches, and hast gotten Gold and Silver into thy treasures:—By thy great
“ wisdom and by thy Traffick, thou hast increased thy Riches, and thine heart is
“ lifted up because of thy Riches.”

“ Thus saith the LORD God:—Because thine heart is lifted up, and thou
“ hast said I am a god, I sit in the seat of God in the midst of the seas; yet thou
“ art a man and not God, though thou set thine heart as the heart of God.”

Ezekiel.

TO THE
REV. WILLIAM SHEPHERD.

Dear Sir,

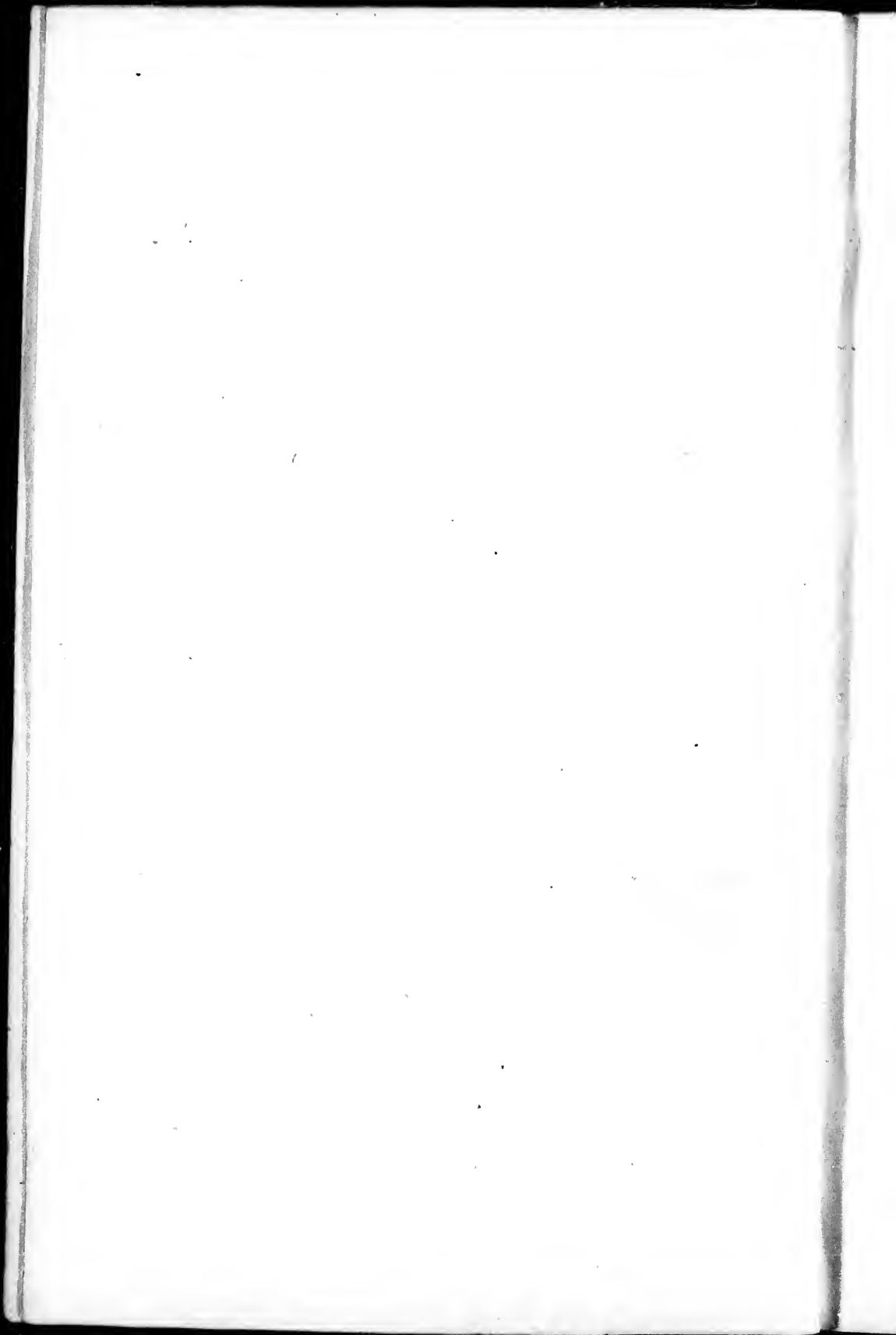
It is a satisfaction to me, to find that the sentiments contained in the following Letter, appear to you deserving of attention. — Though they should fail of producing any impression on the exalted Individuals for whom they were especially intended, or of obtaining the public favour, it will be a source of pleasing reflection to me, that they have been sanctioned by the approbation of one, whose talents and patriotism are so generally known and admired, but whose generous affections, and enlarged heart, can only be duly estimated by those who have the pleasure to enjoy his friendship and intimacy.

I am, dear Sir,

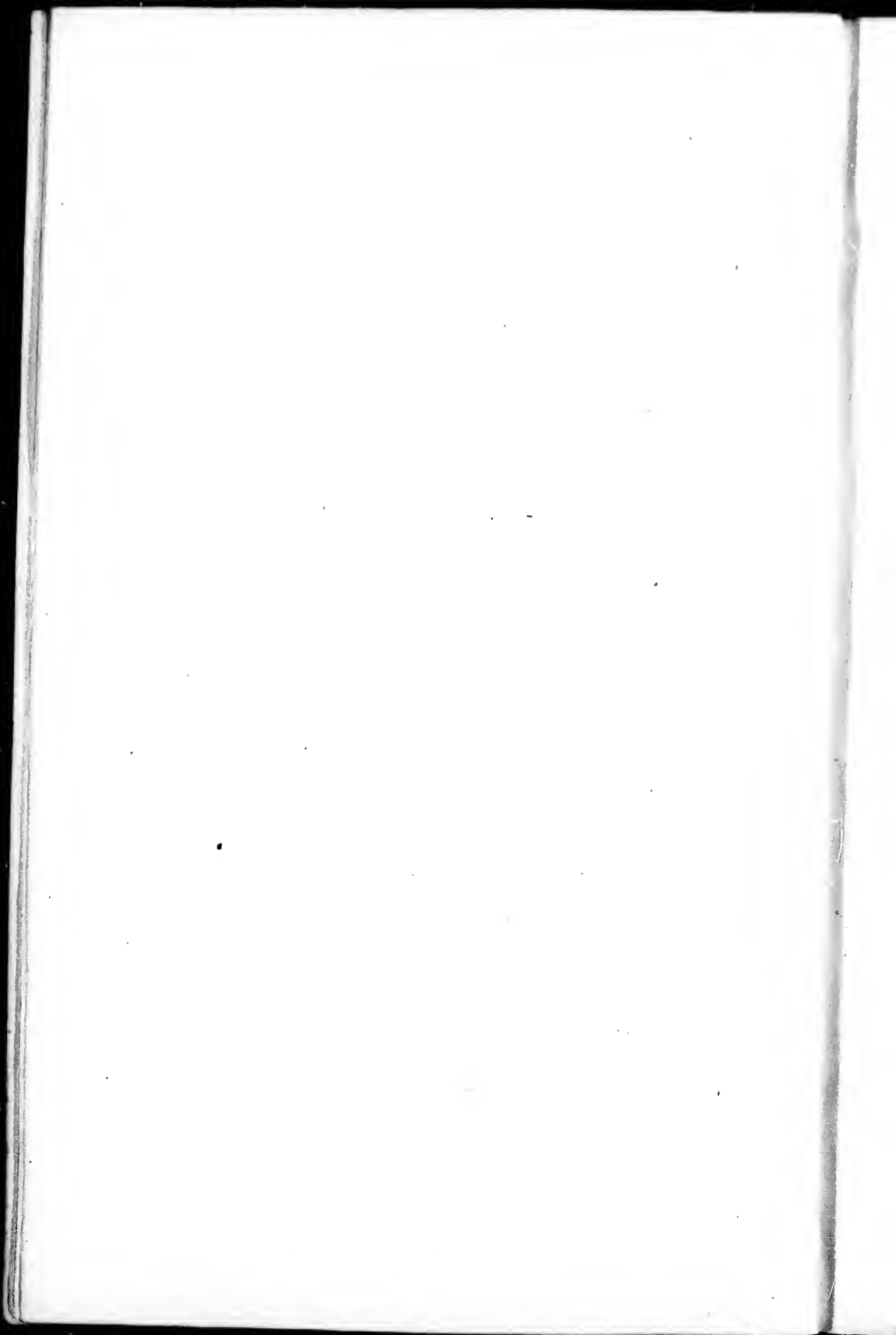
Faithfully, yours,

J. A. YATES.

TOXTETH-PARK, NEAR LIVERPOOL,
18TH JANUARY, 1817.



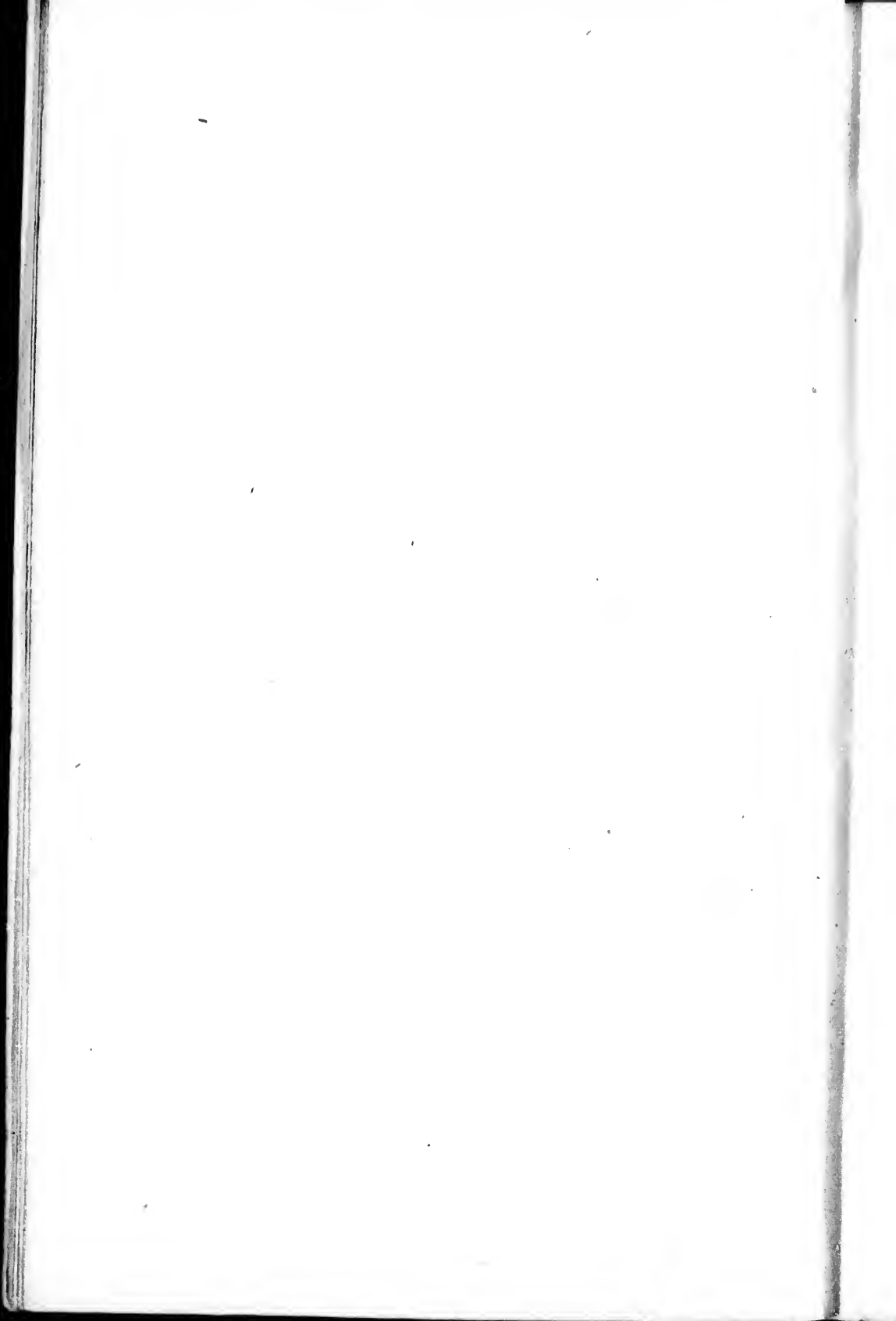
THAT the following Letter has been composed in the short intervals of leisure which an active pursuit of business permitted, would be no apology for a want of accuracy or of interest.—The writer, anxious to ascertain the causes of our Distresses, noted from time to time what occurred to him, as well as what he read on this subject, in order to present the whole in one view to his own mind; and not finding that any thing conclusive has been presented to the Public, he has committed the result of his inquiries to the press. However these pages may be received, he shall rest satisfied—feeling that his motives were good, and believing that the humblest individual who loves his Country, ought to express his sentiments and views respecting her present difficulties, with the freedom that becomes an Englishman, and with the attachment and respect that are due to her Laws and Institutions.



PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.



IN preparing a second Edition of the following Letter, the Author has given some additions and illustrations, and corrected several inaccuracies which had escaped his notice. He has also brought forward more fully the argument concerning our Foreign Trade, and the manufacturing interests dependent upon it. The light in which he has placed this subject, though it appears to him just and important, he is aware has been deemed too favourable, and will become a subject of controversy; but as he has not leisure to engage in any further discussion of this question, he shall now leave it to be canvassed by those who are more competent to do it justice, contented to have brought it fairly before the Public.



SIR,

I CRAVE permission to address the following Letter, on the situation of our affairs, to your Royal Highness, as the proposer of a resolution at the meeting in the London Tavern, attributing the whole of our distresses, and the peculiarly difficult circumstances with which we are surrounded; to our *sudden transition from War to Peace*, and what your Royal Highness has been pleased to term the "*Revulsion of trade.*" I am convinced, indeed, that this opinion was not the dictate of your Royal Highness's own judgment, but that it was framed by some persons who deemed it prudent to remain in the back ground, whilst the illustrious individuals who have so often patronized the cause of the afflicted poor, were to appear before the public, as the authors and the promulgators of sentiments and propositions so contradictory to the common sense of Englishmen. Under favour of your recommendation, and that of your illustrious brothers, however,

a considerable number of Noblemen, Bankers, &c. have subscribed their names, with various sums from £10 to £100 each; and a sum total has been exhibited, which, when raised, will amount to about £44,000. This is to accomplish the salvation of the manufacturers, and the relief of the numerous classes of poor labourers and mechanics from the load which weighs them down; and, in short, to counteract all those evils that have arisen, as we are informed, from our " sudden transition from a state of war to a system of peace."

It is not difficult to imagine the benign complacency with which the breasts of these distinguished personages were inspired, when they condescended to become the august movers of a string of Resolutions, setting forth the propositions which were to solve all our doubts, and smooth our difficulties. And though my Lord Cochrane, and some few perverse men, who were present with him, prevented them from obtaining the entire sanction of that meeting, it is clear that many persons, beside your Royal Highness, and those who are attached to the Court, are impressed with the general accuracy and importance of the sentiments which they convey.

But can those Gentlemen, who have since become supporters of this scheme; can they,

many of whom are well-informed men and practical statesmen, really be deceived by these empty words? Or do they wish to deceive the country, and to answer some political end which they have in view, by concealing from us the true causes of our calamities.

The *Revulsion of trade*, if it means any thing, means the sudden check put to our trade—its suspension or diminution in some great and important branches. Yes! the most essential branch to many who were prominent on this occasion, *the trade of war*, is at a stand; and it is the stop put to this traffic, which causes us to discover and to feel the monstrous, the unnatural situation in which we are placed. The awful waste of blood and treasure is suspended, and the trade in human misery at a pause. Whilst Europe is smiling at the dawn of a happier era, and her sons rejoice in the prospect of resuming the peaceful arts of life, England mourns the loss of the great consumption of her corn and cattle, and the disappearance of those military fleets and battalions which were equipped at her cost. She laments that the armies which her weavers clothed (alike her enemies', as her own and those of her allies) are no more her customers; that war has ceased, and this great mart for her wrought iron, and her naval and military stores, is closed.

Let us not then rest satisfied with the pompous but unmeaning phraseology of the meeting at the London Tavern. Let us examine more minutely the real causes of our distress; and if we are enabled to arrive at a more satisfactory solution, we may discover some remedy more palatable to the taste of Englishmen than the almsgiving which these Gentlemen have so humanely set on foot. I will not make any amongst them blush, by setting forth the small extent of the sums *they have subscribed* on this occasion, when compared with the sums they have drawn yearly from the pockets of the people; but I will venture to offer an opinion to *those who have not subscribed*—that if they are the receivers of pensions or sinecures, or a much greater salary out of the public money than the actual services which they perform fairly entitle them to, they would do wisely to withhold their names.

Before we proceed, however, let us contemplate the band of patriots that pass in array on this occasion, proposing one resolution after another, in a manner that excites examination, and fixes the public attention.

Three Royal Dukes are stated to preside; the Duke of York is in the chair, with the Duke of Kent seated on his right, and the Duke of Cambridge on his left hand. After a speech

from the illustrious chairman, setting forth the object of the meeting, the Duke of Kent proposes the memorable resolution—" That it is *the sudden transition* from a state of extensive War to a system of Peace, that has occasioned a stagnation of employment, and a *revulsion of trade*, deeply affecting the situation of many parts of the community, and producing many instances of great *local distress*." After a very courteous discussion with my Lord Cochrane, which ended in some modification of this resolution, the *Duke of Cambridge* proposes an appeal to the well-known liberality of the English nation, who, having so frequently aided the sufferers of *other countries*, will, he trusts, not refuse to assist their starving fellow-countrymen. The *Archbishop of Canterbury* next comes forward with an appropriate resolution, the *Duke of Rutland* with a fourth, *Earl Manvers* with a fifth; and lastly, the *Bishop of London* moves the thanks of the meeting to the *Duke of York*:— a subscription is opened; these beneficent and distinguished characters congratulate each other on the happy issue of their endeavours, and their breasts are elated with conscious pride, when they contemplate the business of the day.—How great then must be their disappointment, to find that their subscription does not proceed, *that their recommendations are not followed*.*

* The country begins to be tired and disgusted with the manner in which the *charity* and *beneficence* of certain noble

Before we proceed to investigate the causes of our sufferings, let us inquire a little into the extent of them, and view the situation in which the country actually stands.

For nearly a quarter of a century, has England been mixing in the most tremendous conflicts which have ever raged in Europe, or afflicted the civilized world. She commenced by undertaking to vanquish the Hydra of Republicanism; and after scouring the seas with her fleets in pursuit of the many-headed monster, and wasting her blood and treasure in combating its numerous offspring,

and exalted individuals are exhibited in Public Meetings; in the numerous Bible Societies, Lancastrian and Bell Schools, Mission and Tract Societies, that are established through the country; in the meetings respecting Saving Banks, cheap Repositories, and a long train of auxiliary and minor associations, which are supported with so much pomp and expense; The number of these institutions is indicative of a very unhealthy state of society; but they are become a part of our system, and they must be supported, notwithstanding they are so numerous as frequently to cramp and paralyze the efforts of individuals, who would be enabled to do much more good with their money, if they could withdraw it from these public charities, and apply it to individual relief. All persons are expected to support the public charities; and the private citizen is flattered by the condescensions and public notice of the Duke of —, or my Lord —. Some illustrious person patronizes the institution, and comes to the yearly meeting, with a few of his noble friends, to eat a grand dinner, and trumpet forth each others benevolence to the public. A string of resolutions are read, one by one great man, another by another; then the Earl of — votes thanks to the Duke of —, and the bishop to the earl, and the viscount to the bishop, and so on down to the vicar and country gentleman. All seem to have forgotten the great precept of our common Master—"Do not your alms before men, that ye be seen of them."

she has finished by compelling the French people to plant in their soil the last withered stem of Legitimacy, the old stock which they flattered themselves they had rooted out for ever; to forswear their title to Liberty, and to become once more the slaves of the *Grand Monarque*.

But wild and presumptuous as were the grounds on which we commenced hostilities, unbecoming a great nation, conscious of her strength, and of the excellence of her own institutions and government, their termination seemed to justify the commencement; and the majestic and imposing attitude which this country assumed in the latter periods of the war, was calculated to astonish and dazzle the world. The object being at length accomplished, of disabling that *Herculean child* of Jacobinism, Bonaparte, from directing any longer the destinies of Europe, this country claimed the merit and received the lofty praise.

Such was the object aimed at, and such the great end attained, in the estimation of the court, and of those enlightened statesmen who for ten years have guided the vessel of the state. They have been so dreadfully alarmed by the name of Napoleon, that they cannot see any good to compare with his destruction, nor imagine any evil that can result from the crisis of affairs which has accompanied his downfall.

Since this dreadful phantom has disappeared, since this Prometheus has been chained to the rock, we may look with a little more *composure* at the consequences arising from our late contest, and estimate more *accurately* the effects of our arduous, of our unparalleled efforts in the righteous *cause of Legitimacy*; I mean as they affect the strength and resources, the respectability and happiness of the British nation.

It appears from the best authorities, that the Population of these Islands has increased, in a greater ratio, during the last twenty years of difficulty and exertion, than it had done since the great era of the Revolution, or than can be found in the other countries of Europe during the same period.*

In this short space of time, how great have been the other additions to our physical strength, and the visible extension of our wealth! Our Agriculture has been so much improved, and the produce of our soil so greatly extended, that we are become habitual exporters of corn; the produce of the old lands is doubled, and immense tracts, which were lately lying waste, are smiling with fertility. The seas of both hemispheres have been covered with our ships; annually above

* See the Population returns for 1801, and 1811, and Mr. Rickman's Tables annexed to those returns.

20,000 have entered our ports; our artizans have dispersed their fabrics over regions where the name of England was unknown, and the light of civilization had scarcely dawned:—the East and the West were tributary to our flag, and the stream of commerce flowed into the land with so copious a tide, that the navigation of the world seemed at length to centre in the ports of Great Britain.—The genius of trade, scared from her accustomed haunts in France, Holland, and the Northern ports, by the frightful convulsions and wide-spreading waste of the revolutionary war, fled to England for an asylum. Her sons flocked hither with their capitals from the North and the South of Europe, and London became the great emporium of traffic. The American Republic, which, in the first years of the European commotions, had largely extended her commerce at the expense of the belligerent nations, became gradually more cramped and limited in her trade by the powerful jealousy of Great Britain; until all her shipping was shut up in her ports, by her own successive acts of embargo, non-intercourse, and war; and the foreign commerce of England was the commerce of the world:—O Britain! queen of the isles! how was thy name exalted among the nations!—Thy sceptre waved omnipotent from shore to shore, —thy spear was brandished with prevailing might on the plains of France; and the fortresses of Belgium became the barracks and tents of thy con-

quering battalions,—whilst thy subjects were at once the manufacturers and navigators of the civilized world. Thy cities were the favourite seats of science; thy lands presented a succession of gardens, adorned with villas; thy merchants were princes, and the cultivators of thy soil became the lawgivers to the globe!

So imposing, so magnificent was the spectacle which this country presented at the termination of the war; all hearts rejoiced at home, and we were the object of admiration and astonishment abroad. Our last grand effort, closing with the short, but decisive, campaign of Waterloo, though unparalleled in extent, and involving an alarming expenditure of our resources, was made with more apparent ease than any of our previous exertions, and the public mind seemed to be intoxicated with a conviction that our power was unbounded, and our financial and moral energies never to be exhausted.—The taxes were raised apparently with the same facility with which they were voted; the trade of the country seemed to receive a fresh impulse on the restoration of Peace; and as the intercourse of the long divided nations of the earth brought to our shores a train of adventurers, and the enterprise of our merchants sent new speculators and factors to numerous Ports to which they had before not had access, we appeared to be extending our navigation, and finding new vents for our manufactured

goods; corn became suddenly cheap, and the heart of the poor man was bid to rejoice.

Ere long, however, a cloud was discerned in the horizon. The splendour of the scene became dimmed by a thick mist. The most important classes of the community, the Land-owners and Farmers, began to complain that the prices of the produce of the soil were fallen *ruinously low*. The great export of their corn and provisions, for the supply of our army and navy, where profuse wastefulness caused a profuse demand, had ceased; the plains of Poland and Belgium, which had been of late the unfruitful arenas of contending nations, began again to produce their crops of grain; and the desolated fields of France and Spain to smile with their wonted fertility.—A market was sought in vain for our surplus produce, and it appeared as unfortunate to have too much as too little of the good things of the earth. Unheard-of and alarming scenes of riot were acted in the great corn districts on the East side of the Kingdom; and a special commission was sent to Ely to punish the criminals, and by timely severity to prevent an ignorant and deluded peasantry from carrying their system of outrage and devastation to a more dangerous extent.

The ship-owners and merchants were the next to complain; and as they live together and act in bodies, their complaints were louder,

though they did not suffer so severely. Their ships were compelled to carry for the half, or the third part, of the freight they had been used to receive, and for a smaller rate than could possibly defray the expenses of wages, and wear and tear. They flocked from one port to another on the western shores of the Atlantic, as well as the European seas, in quest of freights; and returned home, after the most ruinous expeditions, to lie up in idleness, in our magnificent docks. The cause of the evil is the same—there has been too much produced; the consumption and waste of the war has ceased, and other nations (the Americans, the Dutch, the French, and all who had been cramped in their exertions by our maritime superiority) begin to carry for themselves.

Lastly, are uttered the loud complaints and deep groans of the manufacturers. The weavers of Spital-fields have been for some time gradually pining under a slow decline of their trade. The frame-breakers in Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire resume their nightly operations against the machinery for the abridgment of labour; general *Lud* and his associates are brought for trial to the assizes; there is no doubt of their guilt, but the witnesses are overawed by the menacing appearance of the attending crowd; the jury are compelled to acquit them, and there is great reason to fear that had they been

found guilty, the court would have been a scene of contempt and uproar, and the robes of justice would have been torn by the infuriated mob.

But the Iron districts, near Birmingham, present the most melancholy picture of afflicted humanity; nearly one half of the forges are silent, and it is impossible to conceive deeper distress than that which is exhibited amongst the colliers and miners, who behold their employers failing around them, and themselves reduced to beggary. The poor wretches can no longer obtain any employment; the parish rates are exhausted; and they are sent abroad, with recommendations from the magistrates, to beg their way to other districts, where they may either find work or charity.

The clothing districts in Yorkshire do not present the same picture of extreme distress, because the woollen manufactures were not so extravagantly extended during the war; but the complaints there have been more general than was ever remembered; and the weavers openly threaten to renew their attacks upon the machines, which they ignorantly conceive to be the cause of the diminished demand for their labour.

The Potteries in Staffordshire have experienced a degree of stagnation almost as alarming as that

which was felt during the period of the last American war; and even the extensive Salt-works of Cheshire are so idle that half of the craft usually required in conveying that commodity to Liverpool, are lying unemployed.

Let us, finally, turn towards Manchester, the emporium of the greatest branch of manufacture which this country has ever boasted, or the world beheld; for our cotton-trade has so greatly encroached upon the fabrics of woollen and silk, that it may be now called the great staple manufacture of Great Britain. How does it stand the general shock?—How many thousands are out of employ?—How many looms are idle?—And what prospect is there of a change? It is impossible to answer these questions correctly; but it is within compass to say, that the wages of the weavers never were so miserably low; able manufacturers receive only 6s and 7s a week, for hard labour; and to enable them to support their families, they have habitual recourse to the poor-rates. These were never so high as they now are—from 6s to 8s, and even as high as 10s and 12s in the pound on the extreme rents, in many of the large towns in the neighbourhood of Manchester.

The cause of this distress is the same, — the quantity of manufactured goods produced is

excessive.' The yarn and twist which are spun to be exported for the use of the weavers of Germany and Switzerland, are the only articles which have regularly met a ready sale; a proof that the restoration of Peace has given fresh vigour, and renewed activity, to the manufactures of those countries, in this branch.

Such at this moment is the picture which the country exhibits of its internal trade and foreign commerce. The sketch is a hasty one, but not coloured, I believe, beyond the truth. What an affecting, what an awful contrast does it present to the reflecting mind: "We looked for peace, but no good came; and for a time of health, and behold trouble."—Jer. Great Britain, late the arbitress of contending nations, the envy and admiration of the world, is in an instant overwhelmed with distress, and become the object of commiseration to those very States which she prides herself on having raised from oppression, and saved from annihilation. Her artificers and labourers, more industrious and skilful than those of any other nation, utterly unable to maintain themselves by their own exertions, are now consuming above ten millions of the public income in poor rates; and are accepting (though with poignant and reluctant feelings) any little pittance which may be dealt out to them from the London Tavern fund, which, with the aid of foreign

princes and domestic pensioners, amounts to about £44,000.

Greatly increased in her active and capital stock of every description, habituated to vigorous exertions, her commerce and finances seem to be going to decay;—her fields more verdant, and her soil more highly cultivated than those of any other country, thousands and tens of thousands of her industrious labourers, half-fed and half-clothed, ask in vain for employment:—her manufactures, more ingenious and varied than those of any age or country, can no longer give employment at home to a vast population, who are forbidden by the jealous system of our laws, from seeking employment abroad.* Confidence is destroyed amongst all the mercantile classes.—Whole districts, both in the farming and manufacturing parts, unable to maintain their poor,

* It might be conjectured that government would not be sorry to get quit of a portion of our manufacturing poor, who cannot find work in this country, and, desponding or dissatisfied, seek to pass into some other; but in the Gazette of the 30th July last, such persons are advertised that the existing laws will be enforced, prescribing severe penalties against those who attempt it. When will governments learn the impolicy of continuing such restrictions upon the liberty of the subject? The manufacturers have had advantages and privileges continued to them so long, and ministers have so uniformly been led to act upon the *mercantile system*, that it is scarcely to be expected they should propose the repeal of those unjust and absurd laws; but it may be hoped some independent member of the legislature will direct the attention of Parliament to the subject at this time, even though he should thereby not promote his popularity.

(for in many instances almost the entire population are become paupers,*) send them forth, in spite of the laws, to beg for charitable support;—robberies have increased to an alarming extent in the towns, and the highways are infested with swarms of sturdy beggars, whose appearance excites mixed emotions of commiseration and fear.

England! my beloved country! active, patient, and ingenious in thy industry; noble, generous, and courageous in thy spirit; fruitful in talents and in virtuous exertions; more rich and more powerful than any other kingdom which has flourished in ancient or in modern times; who hast, for twenty years past, fed and subsidized thy numerous allies, and art but now resting from having subdued the legions of France;—are thine

* In the book which has just been published, containing the answers from all parts of the country, to the inquiries of the *Board of Agriculture* respecting the cause of our distresses, the most alarming picture is given of the sufferings of the farmers.

Notwithstanding the very reduced prices of provisions, the poor rates have advanced in the last two years 20, 30, and in many districts 40, 50, and 60 per cent. In several cases, "the farmers who contributed to them, have been obliged to give up their farms, and are actually become paupers themselves, receiving parochial relief like other paupers." Some districts are obliged, in aid of the parish receipts, to *hire out to the highest bidder the labour of those paupers who are able to work*, and in one parish all are become paupers, excepting one individual, who pays accordingly all the poor-rates himself. It has been confidently stated, that this book was suppressed by the desire of ministers, and the appearance of it must consequently excite a degree of attention which it would not otherwise have received.

own industrious children to starve in the midst of plenty, and be abandoned to misery, whilst opulence and splendour glitter around them? Are all thy benevolent institutions, and thy costly establishments, for increasing the comforts and bettering the condition of the lower orders, unable to ward off the horrors of unheard-of pauperism? Are thy sons, who have so nobly fought the battles of their country, returned to their families and homes to perish miserably, or betake themselves to the commission of crimes? Is the mighty apparatus of thy commerce, are thy stately ships and lofty magazines, to slumber in idleness, and thy magnificent docks and quays to be grown over with grass?—Thy stupendous engines, and the wonderful variety of mechanism that impels thy manufactures, are they to stand still, or be transferred to more favoured regions? — Is the fickle genius of commerce about to fly from thy shores, as it did of old from Carthage, Venice, and the cities of the Netherlands? — Art thou, then, at length doomed to sink in the scale of nations?—Are thine energies extinct, and all the attributes on which thy greatness hath been founded, are they no longer to be found? Is there no vigour in thy councils? no patriotism in thy prince? no saving virtue in thy people?—

Such are the exclamations which every lover of his country will make; such the questions

which he anxiously and continually proposes. Let us examine them with freedom and impartiality; and subduing as much as possible those prejudices and feelings which prevent us from seeing the truth clearly, let us consider what are the main causes of so unfortunate a reverse, and in what manner our misfortunes admit of remedy or mitigation.

As the earliest complainants, after the termination of the War, were the *Farmers and Landowners*, so we may trace a very considerable portion of the general distress of the community to *their sufferings*.

Our own fellow-subjects are the best customers for our manufactures; and when *they* are no longer able to purchase the same provisions and clothing, and to provide their houses with the same utensils and furniture to which they have been habituated, the manufacturers of these various articles will in vain look to foreign countries for customers to supply their place.

It is admitted on all hands, that among the principal causes of the surprising extension of Agriculture in the United Kingdom, were the great scarcities in 1796 and 1800, and in a very great degree likewise, the wasteful consumption of our armies and navies; but more perhaps than any thing else, the profusion of capital

which arose from the loans of government, and the issues of paper-money by the Bank of England and the country banks.

Never was so great encouragement offered, for the application of labour and capital to Agriculture, as that which presented itself to the people of this country, during the greater part of the War. *Commerce* was surrounded with peculiar difficulties for a succession of years; being exposed to extreme hazards, and the most perplexing fluctuations, owing to the inveterate hatred of Bonaparte, and the bold devices which he contrived, in the hope of excluding our merchants from the ports of Europe. The *manufacturers* participated, in a great degree, in the checks and embarrassments which the merchants experienced; but they did not reach the cottage of the labourer, nor did they affect the farmer in his retired pursuits. He found constant customers for his produce at home, and at high prices; he was encouraged to increase his own comforts and those of his family, to extend his cultivation, and make it more productive by manure. Great capitalists quitted the walks of commerce and of manufactures, in which they were so frequently perplexed and embarrassed by the endless interference and novel regulations of government; by licences and simulated papers; by the restrictions of the enemy's Decrees, and our own Orders in Council, to embark in the more certain

pursuits of agriculture. This circumstance created a demand for estates, which combined greatly with the other causes to raise the value of land. Still, as cultivation extended, and the old lands produced a greater abundance, the demand kept pace with the increased produce, and the market prices rose in proportion.

In the mean time, the extended circulation of the country, consequent upon the general system of banking, mercantile enterprise, and government expenditure, created such a profusion of paper-money, and credit was so easily obtained, that the farmers were freely accommodated by the country bankers to whatsoever extent they required; nay, the bankers' notes were frequently forced upon them, for the purpose of bringing those notes into circulation; and thus the tillers of the soil were induced, not only to enrich the old lands to the highest degree of culture, but to open new and waste territories, which nature seemed to have destined to perpetual barrenness.*

* This consequence, arising from the extent of *country bank notes*, deserves more examination than we can devote to it here. They became, during the war, the principal circulating medium of the small towns and farming districts; and found their way at length, in such large quantities, into the great manufacturing towns and their neighbourhoods, as to push the *bank of England notes* nearly out of use. The latter have all along, indeed, formed almost exclusively the currency of the rich and populous *county of Lancaster*, and the expe-

In proportion as the agriculture of the country flourished, our great staple manufactures

rience of many years has shown, how much they are to be preferred, in a highly populous and trading community, to the circulation of private bank-notes. These, however, have formed the bulk of the circulating medium of the rest of the country, and no class of the community has profited so much as the country bankers, by availing themselves of the circumstances of the times. Unproductive labourers, and for the most part provided with little capital stock, they have had the ingenuity to make their "promissory notes" pass current with the lower orders; they have thrown out their lines with so much address as almost to escape observation, but their cobweb-notes are scattered over every district, and at length the industrious bees are unwarily entangled in them. Though, no doubt, they sometimes represent real property, they have frequently no solid foundation, but rest on the confidence and ingenuity of the banker himself, who is frequently an attorney or adventurer in some mine or manufacture, and has thus the means of inducing the poor whom he employs, to take his small notes in payment for their wages.—His schemes prove fallacious, and the wind of suspicion blows on his credit;—his notes appear before him all in a moment;—unable to meet them, he sinks without the possibility of ever rising again, for he has no trade to depend upon. Of all the dealers who have failed in the last few years, bankers have become bankrupts to a greater extent, in proportion to the extent of their operations and their real capitals, than any other. Is it right, that those who profess to be the safe depositaries of the savings of the industrious labourer, (and who only allow a small interest in consideration of the security which they afford,) should thus be permitted to expose that property, and abuse that confidence? Let the mother of all paper-currency, the good lady in Threadneedle-street, establish one of her family in every county or great town, for the purpose of supplying a circulation of small notes, (which she cannot do to any great extent without receiving good bills, the representatives of real value, in exchange,) rather than that the system should continue, by which the country bankers set their own afloat without a value. Let us reflect on the dreadful evils which have been inflicted on various parts of the kingdom where these have abounded, and what alarming consequences might have arisen, if they had been introduced into the populous manufacturing districts of Lancashire; where thou-

were benefited, and foreign commerce (which equally depends upon both) revived and extended itself; they all reciprocally aided and promoted one another, and it was difficult to say which presented the surest reward to talent and exertion.

But in a few short months, how great a change has been presented to our view! - The produce of the land fell as the War drew to a close, in an extraordinary and most rapid degree, owing to a succession of two or three good harvests, and the cessation of the demand for the army and navy. At the same time the government expenditure fell from 110 or 120 millions to 70 or 75 millions, which diminished greatly the circulating medium of the country. The failure, at this moment, of several Banks in the eastern counties, was heard with alarm; it resounded through the country like the thunder which announces the coming storm, and the country bankers, generally, terrified by the ruin which was spreading around them, and feeling its

sands are in a moment thrown out of employ, by the inevitable stagnations and revolutions of trade; and where, if the system of private small notes had gained ground, the most extensive ruin and confusion (on occasion of their failure) would have endangered the peace of the community; and we shall be convinced that this is a subject which requires the interference of the Legislature. It would be easily regulated by restricting the issue of private promissory notes to the sum of £5 or upwards.

effects on themselves, began suddenly to restrict their issues of paper money. The farmers could not get for their crops of 1814, above one-half the price they had received in former years, and they appealed to the Land-owners, as the law-givers, by the most cogent argument—the non-payment of rents, to remedy their common sufferings by legislative interference. Parliament debated and examined witnesses, night after night, without satisfying the people as to the causes of their mysterious sufferings, or devising any effectual method for alleviating them. The great advocates of the landed interest proposed (amongst other remedies) a bounty upon exportation, and the refusal to permit foreign corn to be warehoused in bond; others recommended exchequer loans to the farmers, the repeal of the laws against usury, and the permission to export our raw wools. Parliament finished the session by making an unsatisfactory report, and concluded with prohibiting the admission of foreign wheat until the average price should reach 80s per quarter, and in proportion to this for other grain.

This regulation, however, failed of producing the desired effect. The present year commenced without any amendment in our prospects; on the contrary, the sufferings of the farmers became more extensive, and more poignant; and the

industry of the towns began to be paralyzed; for where shall they look for the demand which infuses life and activity into their trade, if the surrounding country is impoverished. Shall they look to other countries? to them they look in vain; for in contemplating our *foreign trade* we only discover new causes of our distress, proceeding, however, from the same source—the overstrained system of the war, which produced great prosperity as long as it went forwards, (though interrupted by frequent checks and irregularities,) but which has now, by an inevitable re-action, brought down upon us an unparalleled weight of calamity.

We have seen how great a portion of labour and capital was devoted to Agriculture, by the *uncertainty* and *hazard* attending mercantile pursuits; but to vast numbers of those who continue in the walks of commerce, this uncertainty is rather an encouragement than otherwise, because they perceive that the prize, if gained, is of excessive magnitude. The obvious effect of war is to make commerce like a game of chance, in which the magnitude of the stakes does not prevent great numbers from engaging in it. The agitation and activity, the keen hopes, and the ardent spirit of enterprise, all serve to keep up an excessive animation and energy. Many persons embark, on the broadest scale, with little

or no capital; who yet, in the general ardour, obtain unbounded credit from others who hope to make corresponding gains by them. — But they do not perceive that they are running over a Solfaterra, a hollow and burning ground; at length it breaks, and the merchant, the manufacturer, the banker, the farmer, and the monied capitalist, who all had placed a false dependence on one another, are whelmed in common ruin. The War being over, people begin to recover their senses, and to look quietly about them; they find that in the general hurry they have been supplied with more of every thing than was requisite; and they calculate more closely what they will want of food, clothing, &c. Hence the merchant experiences a diminished sale for his imported commodities; the farmer for the produce of the soil; and the manufacturer for the multiplied productions of his ingenuity,—he, who before was encouraged to give enormous wages to his work people, thereby inducing them to work night and day, so as to exhaust their physical strength by extreme labour, and to deprave their minds by drunkenness and every species of depravity, is suddenly disabled from employing them. The poor wretches, having no steady moral or religious principles, and consequently no command over their sensuality, find themselves without any provision for the future, and become burthensome and danger-

ous to the community; nor, whilst they are degraded by extreme poverty and dependence, is it to be wondered at, that they conceive "the world and the world's law" not to be their friend, and become the enemies of social order.

Such were the consequences directly resulting from the War, as they affected the mode in which Manufactures and Commerce were conducted. The difficulties which now surround us, are, however, greatly increased by another circumstance which attended the speculative system. Whilst the facility of raising money excited the efforts of all the labouring part of the community to multiply the produce of their industry, *the waste of the War* produced an extraordinary demand; and thus a vast *excess of all commodities* was raised from our soil, our mines, and our manufactures, which was not felt as long as the War continued, but which is now so much deplored by all classes.—To the provision of food and clothing for our own army and navy, we must add the supply of a considerable portion of the armies of our allies, and no small quantity of the produce of our soil and manufactures found its way to our enemies; for it is well known, that in the periods of the most restricted intercourse, consequent upon the decrees of Bonaparte and the English Orders in Council, our goods penetrated into the very heart of the French dominions;

and that the more rigidly the system of blockade was executed, the more openly and directly was our merchandise sent from London to the ports of France and Belgium, under the joint licences of Napoleon and Lord Liverpool.

It would exceed the limits of these pages, to trace the whole of the effects of our *naval supremacy*, in connexion with this subject; it is sufficient for our purpose to explain, that it gave us at length almost a *monopoly* of trade, by bringing nearly the whole of the Colonies and shipping into our hands; and that when the Continental System, seconded by our Orders in Council, excluded us, in a very great degree, from the European countries, our trade forced itself into new channels, and discovered new customers for our manufactures in America, and other regions remote from the scene of War. By these means, we overcame the checks and embarrasments occasioned by the War, and though great irregularities were experienced in the demand for particular goods, and alarming fluctuations occurred from time to time, yet, on the whole, the consumption appeared to keep pace with the increasing produce. At length, however, Peace returns; and the countries of Europe, whose industry had been paralyzed, and property destroyed, by the War, not only begin to manufacture and supply themselves with foreign

commodities, but they indulge an almost pardonable spirit of jealous exclusion against this country; —Reflecting, with mixed feelings of sorrow and indignation, that whilst they lost their trade, owing to the expenses, the hazards, and the devastation of the War, this happy Island was never the seat of the contest, but was occupied in providing them with the means of carrying on the work of destruction, as well as with every article which they used to provide themselves, they are incited, whilst they resume their own labours, and pursue their renewed trade with spirit, to exclude ours as much as possible.

If our manufacturers found their interests greatly promoted by the species of monopoly they enjoyed, those of the merchants and ship-owners were not less so. The transport service employed a great proportion of our ships, and of those employed in the merchants' service the number was amazingly increased by our gaining possession of the enemy's Colonies and Trade; and still more, perhaps, by the Convoy system, which almost doubled the period employed in the voyages. But by the monopoly of Trade, which we gradually acquired as the Wars in Europe grew more extensive, and which was finally confirmed to us by the American War, in 1812, we made this country literally the storehouse Europe,

the grand emporium of the commerce of the Atlantic,* the Bank of all Nations.

The termination of the War did not bring with it a true sense of the nature of the exclusive privileges we had been enjoying, nor a conviction of the expediency of drawing in on the return of Peace. The manufacturers and merchants, taking fresh courage from the annihilation of Bonaparte's anti-commercial power, had adventured to all parts of the world, with a more enterprising spirit than they had ever displayed. Their South American expeditions, their notable failures in other more recent enterprises, had not warned them sufficiently. Concluding that peace and plenty must bring with them an unbounded demand for produce at home, and for all descriptions of manufactured goods abroad, they shipped, to Europe and America, more largely

* In proof of this, we have only to refer to the large quantities of various commodities which accumulated from year to year, whilst we maintained the prices extravagantly high. Our stocks of Coffee and Sugar were immense, and yet, in spite of Bonaparte's Decrees, and his substitutes of Beet-root and Chicory, they generally supported themselves much above their present prices.—Logwood was worth in London £25 per ton, though the stock was larger than years of consumption in the whole world would take off, or than it is now when the same article may be bought for £7 to £9 per ton.—The prices of Corn and our other domestic produce were maintained at extravagant rates, by other causes, which we have explained before; but the prices of the foreign articles above mentioned, could only be upheld as they were by the *Monopoly* of Colonial Trade, and the command of the seas, which our naval power conferred on us.

than ever in 1815, and the full effect only became apparent now. British manufactures were sold cheaper all the world over, than in Manchester, Leeds, and Birmingham;—and by a strange concurrence of circumstances, the productions of the principal countries with which we carried on a free and open trade, (that is of all but our own Colonies,) were to be bought cheaper in England than in those countries of which they were the growth.

This unfortunate state of the home-market for foreign productions, was entirely owing to the glut of manufactures which we sent to those countries. For not finding a sufficiency of gold and silver in payment for the manufactures we had sent out, (reduced as they were in value,) or what is the same thing, not being able to get bills in payment for them, excepting at a large premium, our mercantile agents abroad bought so large a quantity of produce, as to overload our markets, which raised the prices there as much as it depressed them here. It is well known, that during the war, the foreign exchanges rated from 25 to 40 per cent against us, owing to the immense amount of bills continually drawn on the English treasury, for the payment of the war charges: so that the pound sterling was only worth, for instance, in France 16 to 18 francs, (equal to 13s 8d to 15s sterling;) whereas

it is now worth 25 to 26 francs, (equal to 21s to 22s sterling;) and in other countries throughout Europe, nearly in the same proportion have the exchanges varied, in consequence of the cessation of our war expenditure.

When, in consequence of the return of Peace, trade resumes its ancient channels, and the wasteful demand of the War is at an end; when thousands and tens of thousands of our artificers are no longer occupied in preparing the instruments of destruction; when the thunder of our floating castles has ceased, and our thousand ships, that carried warlike stores and British soldiers to the theatre of War, are no longer employed;—we need not go to the London Tavern, to learn the causes of our distress. *The revulsion of trade!* Let the noble and disinterested persons, who proposed this mode of solving the difficulty, consider better the nature of trade; let them contemplate the origin and character of the trade of this country, which, arising from Peace, industry, equal laws, and the consequent security of property, has grown up with our Liberty and our Constitution; extended our agriculture, and all the arts and comforts of life; increased our power and influence abroad, and enabled us to sustain the profligacy of our own government, and greatly to counteract the corruptions and encroachments of the crown:—which, by its elastic power, has enabled this

country not only to bear up against the increasing burthen of taxation, but by the credit and wealth it has created, has furnished resources for our successive Wars; has adapted itself to the War system, so as to appear almost to be promoted by it; and finally, when the country has been exhausted, and the state impawned by profligacy and ambition, has again and again accomplished its redemption. — Let us not be deceived,—trade is the legitimate offspring of Peace, and friendly intercourse; and although it may, when affrighted from the scenes of destruction on the Continent, fly to this Island for an asylum, and seem to us for a time to increase by War, we may rest assured that it is an unhealthy and dangerous increase. *The Revulsion of trade!* let the distinguished persons, who would instruct us from the hall of the London Tavern, concerning the nature of trade, leave to the merchants and manufacturers the discovery of the causes of their declining trade and commerce.—Let them apply their ingenuity to investigate the nature of the traffic in places and pensions; let them bargain for sinecures; and barter lucrative offices, for seats in the house of commons which may be more lucrative; but let them learn that the *Trade of War* is not an honourable, gainful, or legitimate traffic, and that its evil consequences must eventually recoil on those who engage in it, even though they may for a time pursue it with

advantage. The Revulsion of this, their trade, indeed, is arrived; a trade that has been too long carried on at the expense of the great bulk of the community which now exists, and of generations which are to follow: and not only at the expense of their labour, their comforts, and their property, but of their moral feelings and religious principles. Let them recollect, that in order to pursue their trade of War, we have mortgaged our houses and our land, and the income and industry of our posterity; and that whilst we have been paying so dearly for this traffic, we have, by exposing ourselves to domestic anarchy, been endangering our whole property, our whole commerce, our security, our happiness, our very existence as a nation.

By thus tracing historically, the general outline of those reverses which have overtaken us, we are enabled to discern one leading feature in the causes which have produced them, applicable equally to the conduct of the government and the people,—immoderate ambition and boldness in the accumulation, and boundless profusion in the expenditure of wealth. The effects of the system of finance pursued by Government deserve more particular examination.

As long as the resources of the State were under the direction of Mr. Pitt, he met the

financial difficulties that were to be annually encountered, with the lofty and independent spirit that distinguished him as a man and a minister.—He disdained to shift off the difficulty and the inconvenience of new provisions from annual taxation, by the expedient of exchequer bills and loans without limit; he made the country and the generation that were bent upon war, pay the greater portion of the disbursements necessary for carrying it on, within the current year. But though his successors assumed his mantle, and adopted his motto—“*vigour*,” they have not had the talent nor the resolution to pursue his measures in this respect. They have added above two hundred millions to the national debt since his death in 1806; and in each of the two last years, have raised as much by loans as were raised during the whole of the first American war.—Hence the profusion of money at the Bank of England, arising from these loans, and from the immense balances of the different departments of government. Hence that increase of floating capital, which, taking its rise in this way, spread itself all over the country, and increased our active circulation and nominal wealth more in a few years than we could have done in an age, without this forcing system, had we been masters of the whole of the gold and silver mines of South America; and hence the wonderful increase in the prices of corn and merchandise,

and those facilities and accommodations to the farmer, the manufacturer, and the merchant, which encouraged them to that unbounded adventure and speculation in their respective pursuits,* to which we have adverted.

We have explained how the farmer found himself in favour with the country banker, and how the merchant always found ready discounts and advances on his bills in London. But the manufacturer was the most fortunate; he was doubly benefited;—he not only got equal accommodation at home, but he found a premium abroad of 20 to 30 per cent on his shipments,

* Dr. Colquhoun, in his large work upon the wealth and resources of the British Empire, working upon the grand scale of things existing at the close of the War, has estimated the income of the nation, arising from the annual return of capital and labour throughout Great Britain and Ireland, at 432 millions, and he has given the particulars with the greatest minuteness, putting down that portion of it which arises from

Agriculture at	217½
Mines and minerals	9½
Manufactures	114
Inland trade	32
Foreign commerce and shipping	46½
Banks	3½
Coasting trade	2
Fisheries	2
Foreign income	5

432 millions.

How the Doctor would estimate it now, it would be curious to know. A popular French writer, I. B. Say, has taken it at £224,000,000, in an ingenious treatise entitled *L'Angleterre et les Anglois*. In the last years of Mr. Pitt's life, it was estimated at no more than £110,000,000 to £120,000,000.

paid by the British government; whose agents sold their bills on the treasury at this great depreciation, in consequence of the immense quantity which they were constantly obliged to draw, and thus enabled the agents of the manufacturers who wanted to remit to England the proceeds of their goods, to do so at a gain of £200 to £300 on every bill for £1000 which they remitted.*

In estimating the share which the different causes, above enumerated, had in producing the effect, some persons are disposed to attribute the largest to the excessive extent of *paper circulation*, consequent upon the liberality of the Bank of England in its issues of notes for the use of government, and for the discounting of private bankers and merchants' bills. The circulating medium of the country was no doubt greatly extended by it, in a few years after the passing of Mr. Pitt's

* In this way it is that manufacturers and others, who produce a large quantity of surplus commodities beyond the consumption of the country, are benefited by the great expenditure of foreign wars; wherever that expenditure is the greatest they find the most profit; and thus we see why our manufactures drooped (as they did) after the revolutionary war with America, and after the war with France and Spain, which terminated by the peace of 1763. And it illustrates very forcibly, the reason why this important class of the community find their interests frequently much promoted by war, though the country at large may be suffering the greatest evils; and why the advantages of returning peace are not felt by them as quickly as by the other productive classes. In Appendix A will be found some particulars illustrating the effects of this foreign expenditure.

Bank Restriction bill in 1797, when the Bank of England began to issue its one pound notes.

The gold and silver coin which had circulated in the country formerly, being wanted for the foreign expenditure of the State, disappeared in the beginning of the last war, and its place was speedily supplied by private bank-notes and Bank of England notes. But it does not appear clear, that the issues of the Bank of England did, upon the whole, exceed the fair demand of our increasing trade, and our extending agriculture. If they were even doubled since 1797, it was not more than was required by the disappearance of the coin of the realm, and by the state of our internal trade, which was doubled likewise; but the £25,000,000 to £30,000,000, which the Bank had afloat in the latter years of the War, was probably not more than a third part of the whole currency of small notes and cash in the country, and not above a tenth of the whole of the circulation, including bankers' bills, and the bills of private traders, which compose as essential a part of the circulating medium, as Bank notes.* It is difficult to determine in what degree this too great circulation was the cause, and in what degree the effect of the over production complained of.—Supposing, however, the *Bank issues* never

* See Appendix A, in which this subject is enlarged upon.

to have materially exceeded the fair demands of the trade of the country, and that it is only in a secondary manner that the Restriction Act has produced the effect referred to, viz. by enabling ministers to raise unlimited sums by *loans*, (which could not have been negotiated to the extent they were, without the assistance of the act in question,) its powerful operation is equally apparent.*

If this increase of circulation had so much effect in encouraging the extravagance of the

* The circulation of the Bank of England never exceeded, in the wildest year of our extravagance, about £32,000,000, which was principally confined to London and its immediate vicinity, and to the county of Lancaster;—whilst the issues of the private bankers are estimated at double that sum at least: I am inclined to think, that they have materially exceeded it in the last years of our prosperity. The former have proved, that *they never issued their notes without value received* in good mercantile bills, (excepting indeed some small loans to government: the latter have proved, by the circumstances attending their extensive bankruptcies, that they were not secured and restricted by any rule.—If however this affords a good ground for wishing to see government apply the remedy of confining the issue of PRIVATE BANKS to £5 or £10 notes, there is a reason more powerful still why the same restriction should be applied to the Bank of England, viz. that they are either unwilling or unable to prevent *forgeries*, which have increased and are still increasing to a frightful extent. If we examine the criminal calendars for the counties of Middlesex and Lancaster, we shall *feel the force of this argument*, and be inclined to hope that the dictates of HUMANITY may produce that effect with the legislature, which views of policy have hitherto failed of producing. There is now gold and silver in the country in such abundance, that no inconvenience could be experienced from the regulation proposed, which would prepare the way for an early and entire repeal of the bank restriction bill.

government, it was no less influential in promoting the spirit of private adventure, and feeding that rage for speculation which took possession of all classes.—The boldness of commercial adventure was not confined to the foreign merchant. The manufacturer surprisingly extended his works at home; and being enabled, through his agent or warehouseman whom he established in London, to convert his *dead stock* into a living *active capital*, (by drawing bills upon him, which he got discounted by some Banker in London or at home,) he created a *new supply of goods*, for which he sought new markets abroad; and thus acted in the threefold character of manufacturer, dealer, and foreign trader.—The farmers were enabled, by the facilities which the same system afforded, to speculate and scheme as much in their produce, as the merchants and manufacturers in theirs; and the miners of iron, copper and lead, all vied with each other in exhausting the bowels of the earth, and bringing their riches to light in larger quantities than the actual consumption required.

As the Bank issues and public loans grew larger, the burthen of taxation also rapidly increasing, all classes were compelled to labour harder, and by exercising more ingenuity and skill in their respective trades, to push their production to the utmost extent. The new inventions in machinery were not confined to the

processes of manufactures; they were introduced into the large farms, and we frequently see machines not only for thrashing corn, but even for saving human labour in the turning of hay; in one place, the steam-engine is made to weave and completely finish the finest cloths, and in another, with unprecedented powers of locomotion, to draw after it twenty or thirty waggons loaded with coal, and the other weighty productions of our mines.

In spite of this extreme production of saleable commodities, the increasing capital (growing continually and prodigiously, by the heavy loans and by the paper circulation accompanying them) kept their market value at a high rate; and there always appeared a ready sale for all commodities—a speculative market, if not an adequate consumption.

Every thing being thus *overdone*, to the last moment of our lavish War expenditure, it is obvious that when this ceased suddenly, to the extent of fifty or sixty millions, a great shock must be felt. The monied interest felt it first, and drew in; not only the Bank of England and the great city Banks contracted their discounts, but above 800 bankers, dispersed throughout the country, found the necessity of contracting; many of them were ruined totally by the loans

made to the farmers, and all were justly alarmed. The fall in the price of all commodities greatly accelerated the ruin of the farmers, and brought on the most severe losses to the great body of manufacturers and merchants, who suddenly found themselves almost deprived of their best customers—the consumers of above two-thirds of their raw and wrought produce.*

If we estimate the income of the country to have been *three hundred and thirty millions*, arising from its agriculture, mines, manufactures, and foreign commerce; and reckon that this suddenly fell to one hundred and eighty or two hundred millions, (which I believe to be within bounds,) we are appalled with reflecting on so tremendous a change, and astonished that the evils consequent upon it have been borne with so much patience and fortitude.

* In order to point out more clearly the great depreciation of farming produce, I have extracted the following catalogue of sales of stock, in 1813 and in 1816, from the answers to the Agricultural queries above referred to, page 207

Average prices of stock sold at the same place, in October 1813, and March 1816.

	October 1813.				March 1816.		
20 horses	£40	3	6 per horse	.....	£10	15	0
8 cows	15	0	0 — cow	.....	6	13	6
35 score of sheep .	38	0	0 — score	.....	19	5	0
Seed wheat	39	0	0 — last	.....	25	0	0
Do. barley	18	0	0 — do.	.....	10	10	0
Do. oats	13	0	0 — do.	.....	8	0	0
Do. pease	21	0	0 — do.	.....	12	0	0

But the remedy is at length discovered and applied!—The supporters of the *meeting at the London Tavern* have raised nearly £44,000, which is to be distributed in those districts where the *Revulsion of trade* has caused much *local distress!!*

The patient, exhausted by an acute disease, applies to the physician in vain—no medicine can be found to relieve the disorder; but the confident empiric steps in, and while he administers his nostrum, and bids the despairing sufferer *to hope*, he consoles him with the assurance that his pains and exhaustion are the consequence of *convulsions*, occasioned by a sudden *transition from a state of plethory*, to a state of langour and weakness.

THE TIME, HOWEVER, IS AT LENGTH ARRIVED, WHEN THE PEOPLE OF ENGLAND ARE COMPELLED TO OPEN THEIR EYES TO THE TRUTH:—THEY HAVE DISCOVERED THAT WAR IS A MORE DREADFUL EVIL THAN THEY IMAGINED; THAT IT IS AN EVIL OF SUCH AN EXTENT, AND SO COMPLICATED IN ITS NATURE, THAT EVEN ITS REMEDY AND ITS TERMINATION ARE ATTENDED BY INCALCULABLE MISERY.

Without entering into the question, whether the people hurried the government into the prose-

cution of the War, or the ministers of the Crown deluded and persuaded the people to approve of and support it, it is certain, that the great majority of the nation did enter heartily into it, and highly approve of the spirit with which it was conducted. What the general effect of the late War has been upon the moral character of the nation, is foreign to our present inquiry; but that it led immediately to those consequences which have been enlarged upon in the foregoing pages, and that it has terminated in the most fearful and affecting crisis which this country has ever witnessed, cannot be denied. Let us not, however, be inconsistent:—let us not rejoice and revel in the luxury of War, whilst we feel only the advantage and aggrandizement which it procures; and when its inconveniences, and ruinous consequences, begin to take effect, turn round and condemn those who conducted it. That the game of War was an expensive one, we never discovered till it was over; because each class was enabled, by the temporary monopoly produced by our naval superiority, and by the ingenious application of capital and labour, to shift off the burthen of taxes which he paid, upon the consumer of the articles which he produced; that is, upon the community at large. The time is arrived, however, when the reckoning must be paid; and it is not right, when the bill is brought, to begin to abuse the host. All the world saw,

and no candid and enlightened Englishman could be blind to, the expensive entertainment which had been provided. All impartial persons, therefore, will be astonished, when they hear the people exclaiming to the ministers of the day, "Behold the consequences of your measures; such are the fatal effects of your misconduct and misrule; it is entirely owing to the dissipation and extravagance of the existing government, that we are individually ruined, and as a nation brought to the verge of bankruptcy."

The nation, generally, disapproved of the measures of the administration in regard to the Orders in Council, and it was compelled to abandon them. They grew sick of the inglorious achievements, and the unprofitable expenditure of the last war with America; and they scarcely signified their feelings, before the government put an end to it. And so it always will be, in a free country like this;—in spite of our imperfect Representation, and the increased influence of the Court, the wishes of the people must preponderate on all great and momentous questions, as long as the energy of the public mind is maintained.

The people have wished for war, and they have had enough of it. It is more than probable—it may be with tolerable certainty anticipated—that (going from the one extreme into

the other) they will now discover, that the same war in which they formerly discerned nothing but prosperity and glory, has been the source of endless calamity, and irremediable humiliation.

That it has, in effect, brought upon us a long train of evil consequences, both moral and physical, is clear; and that it always must be in itself a great evil, is undeniable. But this fact is not made more evident, by what is passing around us now, than by what every intelligent friend to his country and to mankind must have observed and deplored, who has looked at the nations of Europe where it has raged, from the North Sea to the Straits of Constantinople, during the last twenty years.

To attempt the slightest sketch of its progress in these pages, would be impossible; most of us retain a lively recollection of the horrors of Bonaparte's campaigns, during the successful career of his ambition; and we can all trace the bloody history of his downfall; the one and the other present a melancholy succession of legalized massacres, and splendid robberies, continued during an age of tears and groans;—and a new generation has arisen, to behold Tyranny and priestcraft restored to the fairest portions of the world;—Legitimacy re-instated, at the disposition

of foreign bayonets;—the Triple Crown replaced with fresh lustre, whilst the chair of St. Peter is supported by a host of new-created Jesuits; and Imbecility, counselled by the Inquisition, inthroned upon that soil which has been drenched with the blood of free-born Britons.

At home we are still happily ignorant of the worst evils of war—of the horrors which inevitably follow it, in those countries of which it is the theatre. We feel, indeed, the inconvenience of being pinched in our incomes, and obliged to maintain the poor out of our landed property; we lament (not without some feelings of exultation) the loss of relatives and friends, slain gloriously on the field of battle; and are sometimes compelled to drop a tear of unmingled sorrow over the fate of our brave countrymen, who perished miserably in the morasses of New Orleans, or in the fatal and ill-conducted expeditions to Walcheren and Bergen-op-Zoom. Occasionally our ears are shocked by the accounts which reach us, from the remote regions of the East, of the waste and rapine committed by our countrymen, who have added another Empire to our Dominion; “*Il y a des Crimes qui deviennent glorieux par leur éclat, leur nombre, et leur excès; De là viennent que les voleries publiques sont des habilités, et que prendre des Provinces injustement s'appelle faire des Conquetes.*”—But far other feelings

would possess our souls, were we to receive the shock of the conflict on our own shores. Its destroying rage would not be confined to the partial loss of property, or the surrender of the soldier's life in the day of combat. We should be exposed to those perpetual hazards and alarms, which would depress all our energies, and poison the cup of enjoyment; till at length we should become necessarily familiar with scenes of horror and devastation, which, at the same time that they laid waste our property, and destroyed our comforts and our industrious labour, would harden the heart, and undermine the best principles of our nature;—and we should be gradually prepared, by the degradation which such a state produces, for the surrender of our rights and our dearest liberties, either to a foreign enemy or a domestic tyrant.

Let us then, whilst we congratulate ourselves on having escaped the worst degree and form of War, not only rejoice in the return of Peace to ourselves, but especially sympathize in the joy which spreads itself throughout all Europe, at the restoration of this inestimable blessing; and let us beware how we permit our passions and our pride to be again kindled, or views of commercial aggrandizement to tempt us to break the sacred repose which once more blesses the nations of the earth.

Oh! first of human blessings, and supreme!
 Fair Peace! how lovely, how delightful thou!
 By whose wide tie, the kindred sons of men
 Like brothers live, in amity combined,
 And unsuspecting faith; while honest toil
 Gives every joy, and to those joys a right,
 Which idle, barbarous rapine, but usurps.

That the sacred preservation of this treasure will be the best foundation of our future greatness and welfare, and the most secure guarantee of our interests, civil and religious, I am well persuaded. But in the mean time, oppressed as we are with difficulties, and groaning beneath a weight of taxation, brought on by the prosecution of our late Wars; let us proceed to examine what remedies are best calculated to relieve the existing pressure, and what sources of consolation, and of grateful acknowledgment, are to be found in the actual state of the country.

The War left us with a superabundance of all descriptions of goods, arising from the causes above described, and we found ourselves possessed of more food than we could eat, more clothing than we could wear, and more commodities than we could dispose of.—At the same time that our corn and cattle, our iron and naval stores, our army-clothing, and a vast variety of articles, were thrown on our hands to a great amount, the circulating medium was diminished perhaps one-fourth, by the alarm which the Bankers felt,

and a general want of confidence amongst all the trading classes, as well as owing to the diminution of the government expenditure. The capitalists refused to discount liberally, and money became universally scarce. At the same time, however, the taxes were reduced in a very small degree, and not only the crown received a large proportion of the public revenue in the currency which existed when the circulation was much more extensive, but the public creditors, that is the fundholders, received their dividends to the full and fixed amount; whilst the public debtors, that is, the payers of taxes, found their incomes diminished a fourth part or more, merely by the increased value of money, consequent upon the diminished circulation; of course they felt the weight of taxation virtually increased to a great amount, at a moment when they had to encounter a general stagnation of trade.*

* Though Lord Liverpool stated, in the examination of the bullion question in 1810, that "paper currency consists only of bills or notes convertible into cash on demand," and this was a prevailing opinion at that time, it is now generally admitted, by those who are conversant with the subject, that this statement is erroneous. The bills of Bankers and Merchants compose a part of the circulation of the country to a much greater extent than all the notes of the Bank of England and the private bankers; in 1793 the circulation of these bills was reckoned to amount to 220 millions; they probably amounted to 350 or 400 millions in the last years of the War, but as there are no data for calculating their exact amount, it is uncertain to what extent they may have composed a part of the circulating medium of the country in our prosperous years, or how much they may now be diminished. The best criterion perhaps is the

In this dilemma, it has been stated that nothing is wanting to remove the difficulty, and restore things to a state of prosperity, but the creation of such a portion of paper-currency as will bring up the circulation of the country to what it was in 1813. Something like this might have been desirable, as a temporary measure, in 1814 or 1815, when the first shock was felt, in order to prevent the confusion and ruin consequent upon so sudden a change in the amount and value of our currency. The farmer might have survived the storm, by being enabled to keep his corn for the chance of a bad harvest, and the

extent of the Stamp duties; the next, the amount of daily settlements at the *Clearing house*, where payments are made by means of *transfers* and *sets-off* between two-thirds of the great Bankers in London, for the greater part of the bill engagements of the kingdom, with the intervention of a very trifling amount of Bank notes. It is from a reference to these sources of information that the above estimates are formed. If to 375 millions, the supposed amount of bill-circulation afloat in 1813, be added 33 millions of Bank of England notes, and 55 millions of private bank notes, the sum total of these will be 463 millions, constituting the actual currency existing at that period. As this kind of currency gradually increased from 1793 up to 1813, the prices of every thing increased in proportion, and the Landowners, the army and navy, and all to whom money was paid, at fixed sums in pounds, shillings and pence, were paid too little. Since 1813, the currency has been diminishing, and all these parties receive too much. Thus it is that the evils of an extreme paper-circulation operate, in periods of general prosperity, to produce undue confidence;—credit and speculation are promoted in an extreme degree by an excess of currency, and in moments of alarm the evil is increased by a sudden and great deficiency. In other words, the encouragements to trade are greater at one time, and the checks more violent at another, than would be experienced without this paper system.

Landowner might thus have received his rents; all which would have prevented a great loss, and afforded all parties time to adapt themselves to a new state of things, without that violent convulsion which has taken place. Even at this moment it may be desirable to adopt some plan by which those who have unsaleable property, whether in land, houses, or stocks of goods, may raise a transferable capital on them. It would afford temporary relief, and diminish the violence of that fall in the prices of all articles which must take place, and for which it behoves all persons to prepare. As a measure of permanent regulation, however, it would be extremely unadvisable to attempt to increase the currency of the kingdom. It must be left to itself, for we may rest assured it will on the whole adapt itself fairly to the extent and state of our Trade; and that, in the long run, the interference of government will be productive of more evil than good. If the Bank restriction bill had not been enacted, probably the excessive circulation, by the Revulsion of which we are now so much embarrassed, would not have existed; and by attempting to create more permanent currency than the state of trade and credit naturally call for, in proportion as we succeed, we shall only be postponing the time, which must arrive, when the scale of our prices and our expenditure shall adapt itself to the altered state of things, and when a very desirable approxima-

tion must take place between our prices and those of our neighbours on the Continent.

What then is to be done? If our own consumption and circulation will not relieve us, we must diminish our expenses, and increase our exchangeable commodities; and our Farmers and Landowners must submit to the consequences, however severe, of a diminution of the production of corn, cattle, and other descriptions of produce which were consumed or wasted by the War. The toil of our husbandmen is probably quite as great as is compatible with a due attention to social, moral, and religious improvement, and domestic comfort; and with respect to our working manufacturers, they are themselves transformed into something very much resembling the machines to which they are attached. If we produce too much corn, we have no alternative but to lessen its growth, and to direct the whole energies of our laborious classes to those branches of industry in which we so eminently excel our neighbours on the Continent; and whilst we have a large number of labourers, either from the military service or any other occupation, who cannot find employment, it is the first duty of government to provide new work for them, which they may do to a much greater extent than may, at the first view, be conceived possible. We must first consider how to diminish the pressure of present distress; then

we must begin to apply the permanent remedies. But no anxiety has been manifested by ministers to alleviate the existing misery, and there is reason to fear they have been hitherto ignorant of its extent, in as much as they flattered themselves the subscriptions at the London Tavern would suffice for the whole country, whereas they have latterly advised the Prince Regent to send £5000 to one class of sufferers alone—the weavers of Spital-fields.

If, however, ministers are really aware of the full extent of the distress, and do not think it a fit subject for their interference;—why is not Parliament convened without delay, in compliance with the earnest prayer of the people?—When every day brings reports of new distresses and new complaints, and the old ones are reiterated with increased force, is it a time for the advisers of the Crown to shut their ears to this entreaty?—When murmurs and remonstrances, echoed from the Land's End to the Orkneys, “fright the Isle from its propriety,” is it a time for the Ministers of the Crown to advise the further adjournment of Parliament?—When the Harvest is passed, and the Summer is ended, and the poor “are stricken through for want of the fruits of the field,” is it becoming that the powers to which they naturally address themselves for assistance, should

delay to answer their Petitions? — If any thing can shake the generous loyalty of Englishmen, it is coldness and indifference in so afflicting a moment;

“ This makes bold mouths,
“ And cold hearts freeze allegiance in them.”

Were the great Council of the nation assembled, it would certainly serve to sooth the irritation of the People, who, in the poignancy of their complaints, constantly evince a hope that Parliament will do something to relieve them. And whilst the weighty matters of permanent regulation and reform were in agitation, they might diminish present danger, and the weight of urgent misery, by sanctioning with their authority the temporary employment, in public works, of those whose claims and necessities are the most pressing;—a recommendation which would be followed up by every county and town in Great Britain,

If it be asked, in what manner could government employ the multitudes who are wanting work, or how could they find the means of paying them?—it may be answered, that if the serious attention of ministers had been directed to the subject, many useful undertakings might have been planned, to which the labour of a hundred thousand hands might ere this have been advantage-

ously directed, such as improving Roads, making new Canals, building Bridges, constructing Embankments, &c. in the country; new Docks, Piers, &c. in the Sea-ports; and public buildings in all the towns. Employment is the desirable thing; even though it should be unproductive, it will prevent those who have been cast upon society (either immediately by the termination of the War, or by the subsequent stagnation of trade) from preying upon the higher classes, and diffusing among the lower, those habits and tastes which many of them have acquired during the War, highly unfavourable to virtue and good order. — If a man receive 1s 6d a day for his labour, (though he be employed in objects of little utility,) he is a better member of society than if he merely received the same sum in alms. And with respect to the provision of funds, we cannot suppose that the nation who have so lately voted half a million to the creation of a splendid Park, and the opening of magnificent streets to it: and another half million to the erection of a superb Post-office in London, and one equally magnificent in the metropolis of Ireland, can be at a loss to find the means of employing their disbanded soldiers and starving mechanics? This subject, which appears to be of such magnitude and importance, seems to have entirely escaped the attention of government.

When we see multitudes of men, brought up to the trade of war, and when, notwithstanding the drains of the War, the supply of labourers for the fields, and all trades and manufactures, has exceeded the demand, (so that we have at the close of it a very redundant population,) what subject is there which more imperiously calls for the attention of government. — It appears clear that it is the first duty of ministers to provide occupation for them; and if they were able to accomplish but little in this way, the very endeavour to do it would be attended with the most beneficial effects, by soothing the minds of the poor, and leading the rich to assist them in their own districts, by putting them to such work as local circumstances and situations might present.*

* In Liverpool, 2000 men have been lately taken into employment, for the formation of a new dock, at 2s a day, by means of a fund of £20,000, raised by the loans of individuals, for the express purpose of affording relief to the necessitous at the present crisis; and similar plans are carrying into effect in other places. If government can find no other sources of employment, let them send their disbanded soldiers to work at Portsmouth, Plymouth, Woolwich, &c. in the place of those Convicts who ought to be dismissed to Botany Bay. If we examine the Reports of Parliament on that subject, we see that a great part of those who are condemned to the punishment of Transportation for seven years, spend the larger portion of their time, and very frequently the whole, on board the Hulks; old and young, hardened offenders and young beginners in the course of iniquity, all mixed up without discrimination,

But if we have not work at home, what country is there we may ask, which possesses so many sources of employment as England, in her valuable foreign possessions in Nova Scotia, Upper and Lower Canada, Newfoundland, at the Cape of Good Hope, and in the North-west parts of Africa. Great numbers might be removed to these Settlements, where labouring hands could be employed to any extent, and where they would do as much service to the mother country as they now do mischief. But the Population of the Country must not be diminished; we are not even to part with the Convicts who are sentenced to New South Wales.—It is certainly to be lamented, that we should be in such a situation as to render Emigration necessary; but as this appears to be the case in England, would it not be better to relax the Laws which exist against it; in order to get quit of the discontented and idle. For we may rest assured, that those manufacturers or labourers who are the most anxious to go abroad, are not the most desirable members of the community; and that the best Citizens are always the last to leave their Country. “ *La seule bonne loi contre*

or the least attempt at amending or reforming them. This is a striking feature of Criminal Jurisprudence in this humane and beneficent Nation—the country of Penn and of Howard.

*les Emigrations est celle que la Nature a gravée dans nos cœurs.***

* It is curious to observe the misrepresentations that are given in the Journals of the day, respecting the disappointment and sufferings of those English and Irish who have found their way to the United States; they are represented as all anxious to return, and starving for want of labour; as if a steady and industrious man had a difficulty in finding work in that Country where the supply of labour for the produce of the necessaries of life has never equailed the demand,—where the produce of the soil has never been outrun by the Population,—where the people are rapidly increasing in number and riches, and always opening a succession of new lands. They who prefer working with the head to manual labour, may not find it easy to settle either in the United States or in Canada; but in either country there is abundance of employment for all persons connected with husbandry, and providing the ordinary conveniences of life. England, as well as the other nations of Europe, must continue to contribute by emigration to hasten forwards the rapidly increasing population of the United States of America. That Country, besides containing the seeds of improvement from its unimpaired youth and vigour, and the spirit and industry of the people, possesses a government, which, while it affords the same security to person and property, and is more considerate than ours of the rights and privileges of the people, has shown at all times a particular attention to the education and melioration of the lower orders. The administration have likewise distinguished themselves, by directing the national resources to the promotion of all public works, the improvement of roads, and navigations, and the erection of buildings for public institutions on the most liberal plan.—Such a Country must long continue the refuge of those who are driven from this nation by distress, or from France and Spain by oppression; and it is as impracticable, as it is improper, in the old nations of Europe, to attempt to prevent emigration thither. We shall thus lose a portion of our farming population, and of our common artizans; but the most valuable part as affects our future prospects and national wealth, the manufacturers and ingenious mechanics, it may be hoped, will still find that their talents and exertions will meet a surer reward in England than in any other country.

As every thing was *overdone*, in consequence of the peculiar character and circumstances of the War, and *profusion* and *extravagance* became the order of the day, in the expenditure of the government as well as of individuals, we must meet the reduced state of our resources by *economy* in private life, and *retrenchment* in public.—In the regulation of our own affairs, we see the necessity of squaring our expenses to our incomes; and, at this moment, how many thousands in the middle classes, are submitting to the greatest privations, in order to act up to the spirit of this prudent and virtuous maxim. But the government appear resolved not to adopt it. Besides the sum of forty-two millions, necessary for paying the interest on the national debt and the sinking fund, they are determined to make the country pay twenty-three millions annually to maintain an enormous peace establishment.—They will keep up an immense standing army of 140,000 or 150,000 men;—they are unwilling to abate the splendour of the civil list; and above all, they persist in refusing to reduce that long and intolerable catalogue of pensions and sinecures, which the corruption of the War-system has increased to so shameful an extent.

If the pressure on the people were much less than it actually is from these sources, their

petitions for the speedy correction of such abuses, ought to be instantly complied with. Excessive and scandalous as they are, it is the height of folly and injustice, not to listen to the universal call for their suppression. The people care not whether it be this Whig Duke, or that Tory Earl, who consumes the fruits of their labour; but they understand that a Million or more may be saved annually, by retrenching in these items to such an extent as shall not deprive the placemen and sinecurists of the comforts, and even luxuries, of life.* This subject is handled daily in the public papers, and through them is become the most common topic of discussion, in every ale-house in the country;—and as soon as Parliament meet, they will be called upon to listen to the petitions and remonstrances of the

* In the investigation of this subject, it will be necessary to go beyond the precincts of the red book, to seek for cases that call for retrenchment. The expensive modes of collecting the revenue, in its various branches, require controlling and regulating. Most of the great public functionaries, Military, Judicial, Civil, and Religious, are greatly overpaid; and the salaries of the public offices having been immensely increased under the plea of depreciation that took place in the value of money, ought to be reduced, as the amount of the circulating medium, the prices of labour, and the necessaries of life are reduced. Throughout the kingdom, the collectors of stamp duties, and the receivers general of the taxes for the respective counties, derive emoluments from their offices which far exceed the just and liberal recompense that such services require. These offices are become sources of reward to high and favoured supporters of administration. And the collectorships of customs and excise, draw with them salaries and emoluments of such magnitude, that they are generally reserved for gentlemen of some political consideration.

people, touching these points in particular, expressed in language that will not be very acceptable to the ears of ministers.* The people of this country are led to attribute a great portion of the calamities which they are enduring to these causes, just as they ascribe the unpropitious season (with its fatal effects on our harvest) to the *spots on the sun*; they are dazzled, and at a loss to ascertain their number or magnitude, but they are continually talking of their baneful influence, and will not be easy till they disappear.

That the ministers of the Crown, rather than interfere to any great extent with the Civil list, or with the long columns of sinecure places and pensions, will propose some small reduction in the army establishment, is highly probable. But this will not satisfy the just demands of the people; they have a right to require that both objects should be accomplished in no trifling degree; and they will certainly succeed, if with steadiness and perseverance, but without violence, they pursue those means of attaining them which

* See, in the Journals of the day, the Petition sent from Nottingham to the Prince Regent, in pursuance of a meeting held on the 25th September.—An appeal more serious and energetic, was never made by a people to their Prince. See likewise, in Appendix B, the Petition of the Common Council to the Prince Regent, with his Royal Highness's reply to it.

the constitution prescribes. No ministers can long persist in refusing to comply with the reasonable and just demands of a suffering and overburthened, but a free and enlightened people, provided they are conveyed in proper and respectful language, and evidently express the general sentiment of the nation.

It is true, that these *spots on the sun* are the source of boundless emolument and influence to the ministers and the Crown; and therefore they would rather entertain any other proposition, such as modifications of the tithe, game, or poor-laws; the repeal of the laws respecting usury; new loans by Exchequer bills, or the application of the sinking fund to the exigencies of the State; or even taking a tithe from the interest due to the Fundholder.—As soon as Parliament meet, the advocates of each of these measures will be listened to with great complacency; but after all their propositions and schemes are disposed of, and some of them perhaps adopted, **THE HOUSE OF COMMONS, IF THEY WISH TO BE CONSIDERED THE GUARDIANS OF THE PUBLIC PURSE, MUST FINISH BY REFUSING TO VOTE THE SUPPLIES, SHOULD MINISTERS REFUSE TO REDUCE THE EXPENDITURE, AND TO MAKE THE WAYS AND MEANS COMMENSURATE WITH THE IMPOVERISHED STATE OF THE COUNTRY.**

As long as the income of the country amounted to three hundred and thirty millions, which might perhaps be the case in the year 1813, when all commodities sold for probably fifty per cent more than they do at present, and when the circulation (that is the paper-money afloat) exceeded what it does now in at least an equal degree, government were more justified in spending one hundred millions, than they now are in spending sixty;—the income of the country is diminished nearly one-half, the avowed objects of the War are accomplished, and all ground and pretext for a profuse expenditure are gone. Unless a large standing army is to be maintained to preserve internal peace, and overawe the people of Great Britain and Ireland, it ought to be reduced to one-half of its present establishment; and those territories where an extraordinary force is required, (whether in the British dominions at home and abroad, or in other countries,) should be made to maintain the expense of it.—What have the people of England to do with an immense standing army, and all the parade and pomp of war, at a time when the nations of Europe and America are sunk into a state of profound repose, exhausted and recruiting after the long and bloody struggle which has just terminated?—Let the Landowner ask this question, when he sees his tenants sold up by the hand of the tax-gatherer, and the fair return which his estates ought to present to him,

snatched from him by that three-headed monster—tithes, taxes, and poor-rates.—Let it be proposed to the Manufacturer, who finds only half the consumption for his cloth and hardware in the country; and to the Merchant, whose ships navigate the Atlantic half-loaded, or freighted with ruinous cargoes.—Or let it be solved by the Fund-holders throughout the kingdom, who, whilst their incomes remain undiminished, (in the midst of the general reduction that has taken place,) hear every day proposals agitated for rectifying so awkward an accident, and begin to tremble for their dividends. What other classes of society remain to be consulted?—All must answer this question in the same manner, and with one voice deprecate the maintenance of such a force as we now keep up, on grounds either of foreign or domestic policy.

Let these abuses be corrected, let this reform be accomplished; and we shall have reason to look upon the sufferings which we now endure, with sentiments of gratitude and joy, as the means of bringing us back to those good old English principles which were formerly considered essential to the preservation of our liberties and our constitution.

That they are the first and most effectual remedies which our case requires, I feel well assured; and that the country cannot be restored to a

healthy state without them. Happy would it be, if the people of England would have virtue and resolution enough to unite, and with temperance to persevere in one common exertion for the attainment of these objects; if they do not, how can we expect the ministers of the Crown to propose them? their interests would be essentially injured by their adoption.—It is probable, that measures will rather be resorted to by them for leaving the amount of taxation where it is, and shifting the burthen from one shoulder to another by the old contrivances of Loans from the Bank, Exchequer bills, and the misapplication of the Sinking fund.—It will not be difficult to raise £12,000,000 or £15,000,000 of paper by these means; and the Chancellor of the Exchequer may get through the approaching session of Parliament with more ease, and perhaps a better show of revenue, than the gloomy appearances of things forebode.*

* Whilst these pages are in the press, the opening speech of Louis XVIII to the Chamber of Deputies has made its appearance. It commences by recommending *Economy as the first duty*; we may anticipate that something of the same kind will form a prominent feature in the speech from the Throne, on the opening of the next session of Parliament in this country. Such a recommendation will have due weight with the Public;—and we will indulge the pleasing hope that the wholesome doctrine will be enforced not by precept alone, but by example;—the middling and lower orders of the People already find themselves driven by necessity to practise this virtue to a great extent, as the only means of enabling them to pay the taxes; and by hard labour and frugality they are now doing what lies in their power, to repair the evils arising

But if ministers are permitted to abuse the credit of the country in this way, and to continue to borrow money from year to year in time of peace, farewell to all hopes of those salutary changes, which the pressure of the present times is so well calculated to bring about. We must then rest contented with the application of subordinate remedies, such as the modification of the system of tithes, and the improvement of the poor-laws.—These are indeed subjects of great national importance, and deserving the immediate attention of the legislature; and we may indulge the hope that they will be discussed in a manner becoming the wisdom of Parliament; there is no great interest to interfere, no secret and preponderating influence to counteract the general wish for an improvement in these points. The most that can be done, however, by any alteration in them, will be but a small alleviation of the distresses of the country.

Great evils require great remedies.—If our Taxes are to continue at their present amount, in order that the civil and military expenses of the State, and the splendour of the Court and the

from past errors and extravagance;—it rests with the Prince and the Government to second these endeavours. In the last session of Parliament, ministers were compelled to abandon above 15,000,000 of taxes, of which they urged the continuance; in that which is approaching, we have a right to look for further abandonments without compulsion.

Government, may remain undiminished; if we are to revive and continue the old system of an excessive paper-circulation, to which so much of our present sufferings have been traced, we only protract and aggravate the evil. It is the *load of taxation* that must first be lightened, and the system of *borrowing and funding* entirely put a stop to, before our trade can flourish, and our agriculture be supported, as they naturally should in time of Peace.

Those absurd contrivances which have been proposed in Parliament, *for keeping up the price of corn*, (such as bounties on the export of our own grain, and prohibiting the import of clover-seed, flax-seed, and other seeds and grains, which are produced cheaper in foreign countries,) have no other effect than to direct our industry and capital into channels where they will be less profitably employed than they now are;—they are worse than fruitless; they must ultimately produce increased mischief and misery.* They are the

* The proposition contained in some of the letters to the Board of Agriculture, for the grant of *loans by exchequer bills* to the Farmer, to enable him to keep his corn, (in the same way that they were granted formerly to the West India merchants, to enable them to keep their Sugars and Coffee, during a period of extraordinary depression,) is become nugatory, because the corn of last year is all disposed of, and prices are now so high, that there can be no longer any pretence for keeping grain out of the market in order to prevent ruinous sales. Had the government granted the *temporary facility* of Exchequer bills, to those persons who

manœuvres of the landed interest to shift off the burthen upon the other classes of the community; and ought not to be entertained by enlightened statesmen, who must perceive that such a

in the two last years of extraordinary heavy crops and want of money, were compelled to sell in order to pay their rents and taxes, the prices of corn (and all other raw produce with it) would have been prevented at that time from being exceedingly depressed, as it would now, that we have a bad harvest, from being extremely enhanced; and this temporary accommodation would have produced all the advantages of a *public granary*, without its expense and inconvenience. It has been objected, that it could not be carried into effect without great inconvenience, and that money could not be found to afford relief to the extent that would be requisite; the practical details might, however, have been arranged without much difficulty, had the farmers been as much used to exercise their ingenuity and urge their claims with ministers as the merchants; and the paper-money raised by Exchequer bills for such an object, would have found a ready discount at the country banks, whose interests are so closely connected with those of the farmers, to whom these loans would have been distributed.—If this measure had been resorted to last year, when the farmer was selling his wheat at 6s to 8s per bushel—or rather, when he was so frequently sold up himself—how many industrious families would have been saved from ruin, to hope for better times,—how many of those cottages, which are the ornament of our Island, have been preserved from instant desolation and despair. But such accommodation, we are reminded, would have been contrary to the soundest principles of political economy!—Cannot these be suspended for a moment, to give room to follow the *dictates of Humanity*, as they have so frequently been, in order to indulge the passion for National glory and conquest? Besides, it is in unison with the best principles of political economy, that the circulation of the country should be increased in proportion to the accumulation of goods, in order that the branch of industry in which that accumulation exists, may not be completely paralyzed by a sudden and enormous fall in prices, (as it is apprehended was the case with the Farmers,) and that the suffering parties may have a fair chance of surviving their unexpected shock, and adapting their future conduct to the altered state of things.

system of privilege and exclusion would injure our Trade and Navigation, just as much as it might relieve Agriculture; and that it would be an odious enhancement of the cost of every thing that the land produces, at the expense of the whole community.

That the present Ministers of the Crown, or any others who might be substituted in their place, will voluntarily come forward, and sacrifice one-half of their power and influence for the good of their country, no one can suppose; or that the majority of the House, who have so long supported the views of the Crown, should, in a moment of romantic enthusiasm, become the fast and disinterested friends of the People, is more than our past experience will justify us in expecting. But that on this occasion the People will prove their own friends—that in this momentous crisis they will see and consult their own interests, we may confidently hope. — And if they resolve to be true to themselves in maintaining those interests, and temperate and steady in asserting their rights, they are sure to succeed. — When roused to exertion in a just cause,

“ England,

In little body, hath a mighty heart.”—

And as, enthroned upon her sea-girt cliffs, she defies the encroachment of the sea, and bids the proud waves retire, which threaten to over-

whelm her,—so shall she stay the torrent of encroaching power, throw back the swelling tide of extravagance, and say to the wasteful ocean of corruption, “Thus far shalt thou go and no farther, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed.”

If the country succeed in accomplishing what we have been contemplating, another reform must follow, viz. a *Reform in Parliament*; for without a full, free, and fair Representation, we have no security against the recurrence of the evils we are now lamenting, no guarantee for the preservation of that control over the public expenditure which must shortly be exercised. This is not the place for entering into the merits of the general question, as to the nature and extent of the reform in the House of Commons which is here spoken of; the subject seems to be better understood throughout the country than it has ever before been, and the attention of the public has been so much directed towards it, that there is reason to hope a considerable portion, if not the whole of what is desirable, will be attained.

As long as the War continued, the calm discussion of this subject was prevented by the terror which was inspired by the artifices of ministers, and the fears and alarms which

necessarily arose in the successive periods of public agitation. When Parliamentary Reform was spoken of in 1793, we were told that *French principles* were spreading their baneful influence, and threatened to infect the minds of our countrymen. When the subject was revived in 1798, the state of *Ireland* was alarming, and we were warned against interfering in so delicate a matter, whilst our deluded neighbours showed so little respect for the English government.— In 1803, all attempt to revive the subject was stifled by the alarm of *Invasion*; which continued so long, and spread so generally through all classes, that few had the boldness to mention it. But it was brought forward again, and much agitated at the period of the memorable discovery of the corrupt traffic by which Mr. Dick procured his seat in the House of Commons, and of the indignant animadversion of the Speaker on the declaration that such practices “were become as notorious as the sun at noon day.” The friends of Reform were, however, silenced (after the question had been much discussed, both in the House and out of doors) by the alarms consequent upon the riots in Nottinghamshire and Yorkshire, and by the cry that the *Constitution was in danger*.

The War being ended, Ireland at peace, Invasion a half-forgotten dream, and French

principles subdued; shall we still be frightened from the subject, and called upon to *rally round the Constitution!* Yes! we will rally round the venerable remains of that edifice, which has been gradually undermined by the encroachments of the Crown, and the profligacy of successive administrations; we will still endeavour to support that fabric, which was established on the ruins of tyranny and corruption, and was cemented by the blood of our forefathers. That beautiful structure, which was the admiration of all nations, and appeared destined to become the sacred, the immortal temple of civil and religious freedom, has been defaced by the assaults of time, and its sanctuary dishonoured by an unnatural compact between religion and state policy; yet we will never relax in our endeavours to uphold its mouldering frame, and, if possible, to restore its former greatness.

That some excuse for stifling inquiry will still be devised by the adherents of corruption, is very probable; or if inquiry cannot be entirely prevented, ministers will endeavour to meet the wishes of the country by some partial extension of the elective franchise. Possibly an attempt may be made to put the question entirely aside, by urging that the distresses of *the times* are so urgent and alarming, that there would be much risk in introducing, at this moment, so fundamental a change; and that government have enough

to do to keep the country quiet, without agitating a subject on which so many bad passions may be kindled. And after all, it may be urged, "will parliamentary reform restore our agriculture to a more prosperous condition, or revive our languishing trade and commerce?—And how can it be accomplished to the satisfaction of the whole nation, when every party, and almost every man, has a scheme of his own, with respect to the mode of election and the duration of Parliaments, which differs essentially from all others?"

To enter at large into these questions, would require too much time; it is sufficient for the object we now have in view to reply briefly—Give us such a portion of Reform as will ensure a *free and fair representation of the efficient body of the people*, (whether the range of electors be a little more or a little less extensive, is immaterial,) without the interference of the Crown, and that mass of bribery and corruption which now attend elections; and bring back the duration of Parliaments to such a period, as will render a frequent collision of sentiments between them and the people necessary.—Englishmen will then have some ground to hope for a better state of things. The secret interference of the Crown and the Aristocracy in elections, will be gradually checked; the fatal evils of parliamentary influ-

ence, in extending and continuing the system of sinecures and pensions, by degrees lessened; and all the abuses of the public expenditure controlled. Let this work of Reform only be commenced, and the enlightened spirit of the country will carry it on by such easy steps, and with such cautionary regulations, as will prevent confusion or private injury, whilst it produces a vast and daily increasing degree of public benefit.

But let us not be deceived by the idea that Parliamentary Reform is to accomplish those wonderful changes which its warmest advocates promise. Attributing all our past disasters, and present distresses, to the corrupt state of the Representation, they hold up the government, and the Borough-mongers as a joint faction, which has been artfully and systematically combined for the purpose of oppressing the People; they represent this corrupt faction as the authors of the War, of the Paper and Funding system, and all the political evils which have befallen us since the period that the duration of Parliaments was extended. Mr. Cobbett, whose sentiments are now so widely diffused through the country, and who must necessarily, from the pointed manner in which he expresses himself, have a very powerful influence upon public opinion, places the subject emphatically in this light, in his weekly "attacks upon Corruption." In a late "Letter

to the Lord Mayor," he traces the whole series of our national calamities to this grand source—the corruption of Parliament. (as he had repeatedly done before,) and summing up his argument "in the name and on behalf of the People of England," of whom he thus constitutes himself the sole Representative, he concludes;—"We think that a reformed Parliament, annually chosen by ballot, by the People at large, would be able to put all to rights in a short time, and to prevent such evils in future." Many virtuous and enlightened persons are disposed to acquiesce in this opinion; but we may be permitted to doubt respecting the omnipotent effect attributed to Reform; and to ask whether the corruption of the house of commons is not the consequence of the corruption of the People? and whether a reform in its constitution can avail us without a reform in the temper, and a change in the habits, of the whole community? It may be questioned whether, in any state of the Representation, the house of commons will be essentially better or worse than the great body of the people; and what reason is there to feel confident that if it had been the express image of the people, it would have withheld us from engaging in that career of national aggrandizement and interference in the governments of other countries, which, whilst it has exposed us to all the vicissitudes of greatness, has terminated in the present crisis of suffering and apprehension?

It is surely more reasonable and candid, to acknowledge that national pride and ambition, an insatiable thirst after riches, and a love of glory, to all of which the breasts of Englishmen have always been too prone, have been the instigators of all the Wars which we have fomented, both in Europe and in America; and if the disastrous situation of the country, on the restoration of general peace, brings with it more protracted difficulties than we have ever experienced, the salutary discipline may serve to awaken in us more moderate and just views, and a more accurate estimate of the dangers of interference in the concerns of other States. Some indeed are presumptuous enough to imagine, that we may with advantage wage perpetual War, and draw from it endless increase of power and wealth; but the number of those who entertain this sentiment is daily diminishing, and we may rejoice in the hope that the season of adversity will bring with it a general conviction that our real welfare, internal security and respectability, are not effectually promoted by War.

Granting that through the War, and with the aid of the funding and paper-system, we have been carried forward in the career of prosperity, it does not follow that our advance, even in national wealth, has been and will continue greater than would have been the case had our progress been

through the less rapid course of a pacific system; and with respect to its influence on the happiness and character of the nation, we cannot doubt that it has conspired, with covetousness and ambition, to repress the most generous sentiments of the soul; gradually to harden the best affections of the heart; and to substitute extravagant luxury, and a daring and dangerous spirit of adventure, for that patient industry and frugality which are essential to the growth of virtuous contentment and moral principle, and consequently to the real interests of the community.*

* Much more might be said, in illustration of the evil effects of our grasping and luxurious system upon our national industry, and especially on the condition and character of the lower orders. Moral reflections are rather fitted for the solemn duty of the Preacher, than for the writer of an essay like this; but as this subject is closely connected with the wealth and prosperity of this State, the author hopes he shall stand excused for bringing it before the public.

The amiable Fenelon was no political economist; but on this subject his observations are as just as they are eloquent; I am tempted to give them in his own words:

“ On dit que le luxe sert à nourrir les pauvres aux dépens des riches, comme si les pauvres ne pouvoient pas gagner leur vie plus utilement, en multipliant les fruits de la terre, sans amolir les riches par des raffinemens de volupté. Toute une Nation s’acoutume à regarder comme des nécessités de la vie, les choses les plus superflües. Ce sont tous les jours de nouvelles nécessités qu’on invente, et on ne peut plus se passer des choses qu’on ne connoissoit point trente ans auparavant. Ce luxe s’appelle bon goût, perfection des arts, et politesse de la Nation. Ce vice qui en attire une infinité d’autres, est loué comme une vertu. Il répand sa contagion depuis les Rois jusques aux derniers de la lie du peuple. Les proches parens du Roi veulent imiter sa magnificence; les grands celle des parens du Roi; les gens mediocres veulent éгалer les grands: car qui est-ce qui se fait justice? Les petits

Whilst our present stagnation of trade, and its consequent inconveniences, are operating to bring about a better state of moral feeling in the country, we may calculate upon a gradual diminution of suffering, and a melioration of the condition of the lower orders of society, resulting from the necessity of economy, mutual good offices, forbearance, and sympathy amongst all ranks; which will operate much more effectually than any legislative interference.—The rich have discovered with concern, that they have not been building on a solid foundation; and that they must, in order to preserve what remains of their property and credit, exchange speculation and extravagance for habits of frugality and

“veulent passer pour médiocres. Tout le monde fait plus qu’il ne peut, les uns par faste, et pour se prévaloir de leurs richesses; les autres par mauvaise honte, et pour cacher leur pauvreté. Ceux même qui sont assez sages pour condamner un si grand desordre, ne le sont pass assez pour oser lever la tête les premiers, et pour donner des exemples contraires. Toute une Nation se ruine. Toutes les conditions se confondent. La passion d’aquerir du bien, pour soutenir une vaine dépense, corrompt les ames les plus pures. Il n’est plus question que d’être riche. La pauvreté est une infamie. Soiez savant, habile, vertueux: instruisez les hommes, gagnez des batailles, sauvez la patrie, sacrifiez tous vos interêts, vous êtes meprisé, si vos talens ne sont relevés par le faste. Ceux mêmes qui n’ont pas de bien, veulent paroître en avoir; ils en dependent comme s’ils en avoient. On emprunte, on trompe, on use de mille artifices indignes pour parvenir. Mais qui remediera à ces maux? Il faut changer le goût et les habitudes de toute une Nation. Il faut lui donner de nouvelles loix.”

How closely are the above sentiments applicable to the state of things which has lately existed in this country! *“Sevior armis luxuria incubuit.”*

moderation.—The poor must also open their eyes to the conviction that they have gratified a degree of sensuality and indulgence that was not the best calculated to promote the comfort of their families, and their own permanent welfare; and that they may live more happily, and as well as their fathers lived, upon half the weekly wages which they squandered, during the season of prosperity, in drunkenness and other follies and vices. The Farmers generally, having indulged for years past, in those gratifications which that class of the community did not aspire to in former periods, and which the same class in other countries of Europe do not enjoy, may retrench without any evil to themselves or their landlords; and the Landowners, by being compelled to live more in the midst of their tenantry, will equally benefit themselves, their dependents, and the community at large. If the weavers, who have hitherto so generally pursued their labours in large factories, are induced to return to their cottages, on account of the low rates of wages, and to carry on their business in the midst of their families, they will not be less industrious or useful workmen. Their employers, the great body of manufacturers, will discover that their future success and security depends upon their taking pains to enlighten the understandings of those whom they employ, and to inculcate a love of strict honesty and temperance, of all the domes-

tic duties, and of religious habits, as the only effectual means of making them good servants, and guarding them against the impressions of ignorant and designing persons.—Both merchants and manufacturers may become convinced that their too eager pursuit of riches has fostered selfish passions, and habits of luxury and excess, which must be corrected; and while prudence leads them to pursue their avocations with more regulated industry and habits, they may not only find their trades flourish more steadily, but that the virtues of disinterestedness and a generous regard to the feelings of others, are worth purchasing at the expense of enormous wealth and influence.—Thus it is that all orders, in adapting themselves to the altered state of things, will establish their own interests upon better principles, at the same time that they all promote the true welfare of those with whom they are connected. As the respective classes of society begin to reap once more the fruits of their industry, upon this amended system, they will become more virtuous and truly enlightened; the mutual dependence of the high and the low, the connexion of the Government and the People, will be better understood, and the social system re-established on a more solid basis.—Then may we approach the Throne with confidence and courage, to complain of the violation of our rights, and to demand the restoration of those constitutional

principles which were established by the Revolution; then alone can we look for the completion of our wishes on the subject of a Reform in parliament, in the virtuous representation of a virtuous community.



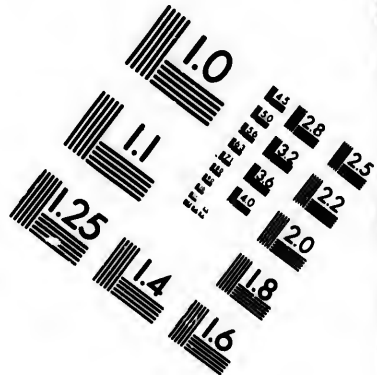
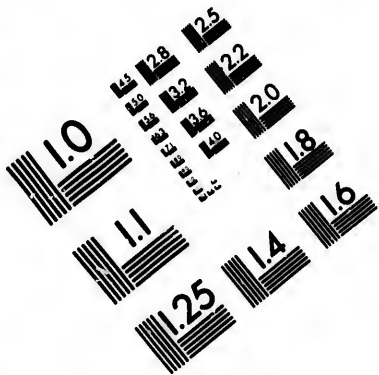
Although the distresses under which we labour, cannot be effectually alleviated without the application of the various remedies above detailed, (and it will require a considerable period of Peace to permit them to operate as they are calculated to do,) we must not neglect the other measures which have been recommended;—viz. modifications of the Tithe and Game-laws; a complete revision and amendment of the Poor-laws; and such encouragement to THE LOWER ORDERS, in every way which the wisdom of the legislature and the benevolence of individuals can suggest, as may tend most effectually to correct their propensities and prejudices; to lead them to more just views of their interests, and unite their feelings and pursuits more closely with those of the higher classes.

In every successive period of English history, (since the commencement of the sixteenth century,) in which the attention of the public has been particularly directed to the situation of the Poor, it appears to have been considered and described as more lamentable and desperate than at any preceding period, and as more wretched than in most of the other states of Europe.* During the whole of the reigns of Henry VIII and Elizabeth, the complaints were increasing; and the accounts, which writers on this subject give, a century subsequent to the enactments of Elizabeth, appear to be as shocking and alarming

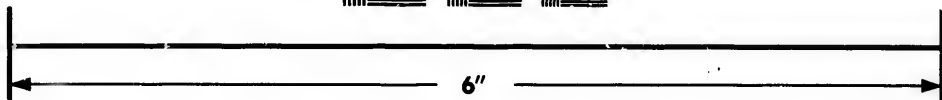
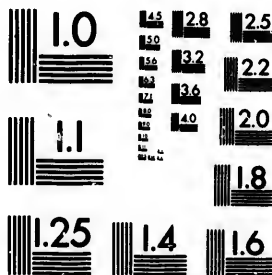
* Vide Strype's Annals; wherein the following shocking picture is given of the state of Somersetshire in the year 1598: the author states, "that forty persons had been executed there in a year for robberies, thefts, and other felonies; thirty burned in the hand, thirty-seven whipp'd, and one hundred and eighty-three discharged;—that the fifth part of the felonies committed in the counties were not brought to trial;—that the rapines committed by the infinite number of wicked, wandering, idle people, were intolerable to the poor countrymen, and obliged them to a perpetual watch of their sheepfolds, pastures, woods, and corn-fields. —That the other counties of England were in no better a condition than Somersetshire; that there were at least three or four hundred able-bodied vagabonds in every county, who lived by theft and rapine, and who sometimes met in troops to the number of sixty, and committed spoil on the inhabitants; and that the magistrates were awed by the associations and threats of the confederates, from executing justice on the offenders."

Such a state of things is not equalled by any thing in modern times, if we except the systematic plunder which has been carried on upon the Thames. At the late assizes at Lancaster, (the worst for the number of felonies and forgeries ever remembered,) ninety-five persons were tried, and of these thirty-one were capitally convicted.





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as those which abounded in her golden days;* and in the last century, no general or permanent

* Sir Josiah Child informs us, that, when he wrote, in the year 1669, "our poor in England have always been in a most sad and wretched condition, some famished for want of bread, others starved with cold and nakedness, and many whole families in all the out-parts of cities and great towns, commonly remain in a languishing, nasty, and useless condition, uncomfortable to themselves, and unprofitable to the kingdom. This is confessed and lamented by all men."—In another part he informs us, that the children of the poor were bred up in beggary and laziness, and were thereby, generally, become more than ordinarily subject to many loathsome diseases, of which many died in tender age, and those that survived their hardships were unfit for labour, or any good pursuits for the benefit of the State.

Fletcher of Satoun, in his discourses on the affairs of Scotland, published about the year 1695, describes the state of mendicity in that country as so dreadful that the peace of the community and even the security of government were endangered by it; and though he was himself so great a lover of liberty, that he thought the people could never have sufficient securities against the Royal propensity to absolute power, yet he recommended, as the only means of checking the evil, that all vagrants should be reduced to a system of domestic slavery.

In the beginning of the last century, the evil does not seem to have diminished; De Foe gives us some information on this subject, in his address to Parliament, called "Giving Alms no Charity."—This was published in 1704, a period when (as he adduces strong facts to prove) there was no want of employment for all who would work. He considers all our workhouses and charities for the Poor, as well as the Acts of Parliament then in force for employing them, as great mischiefs, and tending to increase the number of the Poor. He thinks that their improvidence is the principal cause of their distress; that good husbandry is not an English virtue, and says, "Where an English labouring man will live wretchedly and poor, upon 9s per week, a Dutchman will live tolerably well with the same, and have every thing handsome about him; the latter will thrive, while the former goes in rags."—He adds, "we are the most *lazy diligent nation in the world*; there is nothing more common than for an Englishman to work till he has got his pocket full of

melioration seems to have taken place. This has been ingeniously attributed to various causes, by the several authors who have treated upon the subject. The increase of poverty and beggary, which was perceived to take place at the era of the Reformation, was so remarkable, that Dr. A. Smith, and most writers after him, attributed it to the suppression of the Monasteries, (which vomited forth their lazy tenants to beg and steal from the community,) and to the destruction of the religious houses, from which alms were distributed so extensively amongst the poor. But some able writers, of late, have ascribed it more to the discovery of the gold and silver mines in America, and the consequent influx of the precious metals into the different countries of Europe, which took place about the same period. The newly-discovered riches flowed with so constant and increasing a current, as to occasion an advance in the price of all commodities, with which the price of labour did not

“ money, and then go and be idle, or drunk, till it is all gone, and himself in debt. I can produce, within my own knowledge, thousands of families, whose fathers can earn their 15s to 25s a week, who go in rags because they will not work.—From hence comes our increased poverty, parish charges, and beggary.”

Fielding informs us that when he wrote, about the year 1750, there appeared to be a greater number of beggars, and more distress and misery among the poor, than in all the other states of Europe. And he asserts, as “ an unquestionable fact, that there are at this moment in London one great gang of 100 rogues incorporated into a body, who have officers and a treasurer—reducing robbery to a regular system.”

keep pace; and the situation of the labourer was consequently injured instead of being improved. —That the growing commerce and industry of the British Isles, brought us our proportion of these precious metals is true, and that they were attended with partially bad effects upon the condition of the labourer, is highly probable; but that they were the cause of making the poor more miserable, in the manner and degree which these writers have attempted to show, does not so clearly appear. In towns, the wages of labourers, artizans, and manufacturers, have generally advanced in a tolerably fair proportion to the increased price of provisions and clothing, and the greater plenty of money, though not following them immediately; and in the country, the wages of labourers are composed in so great a degree of corn and provisions, that they cannot suffer to the extent that is alleged from the depreciation of money,

The evil in question appears to be peculiarly attendant upon improved Civilization,—the more rich, refined, and commercial, any nation becomes, the more difficulties will there be to encounter with respect to the labouring classes. In a state of imperfect civilization, where manufactures and trade have made so little progress as to be principally confined to the supply of domestic clothing and food

the humble artizan possesses greater mental acuteness and physical power to exercise those various arts of life which are connected with his comfortable well-being, than the maker of the most complicated machine, or the most skilful weaver of cloth. The latter knows little that is useful, beyond the art to which his attention has been confined from his childhood; though he generally acquires, in addition to great skill in his trade, a remarkable spirit of Independence, owing to the power which he feels of commanding high wages, when he chooses to exert himself.— Thus it is, that the manufacturer becomes generally the most animated of our plebeian politicians and devotes that time to the discussion of public measures which would be better spent in the domestic duties.—But what an inferior character is this in many respects, to the labourer or mechanic of ruder countries and more simple ages of the world!—He not only tills his own piece of ground, and takes the produce to the neighbouring town, where his faculties are sharpened by collision with his neighbours, but he builds his own cottage, and makes a part of his implements and furniture. He has so many little cares and pursuits which require constant attention and ingenuity, that he acquires habits of prudence, forethought, and moderation.— Living in the country, he feels the necessity of not only supplying his variety of wants, but also of pre-

paring to defend his little property ;—and unable to indulge his social propensities with the same convenience, or to the same extent, as the artizan in the city, by a promiscuous and extensive acquaintance, he cultivates those affections of the heart which recommend him as a neighbour, and bind the ties of kindred more strongly. Whilst, therefore, his portion of general intelligence and mental capacity exceeds that of the artizan who is employed in the most refined branch of trade or manufacture, the domestic affections stand a chance of being more exercised and improved ;—and if he has less to make him proud and independent, he has more of what will render him amiable, respectable, and happy.

Before machinery and the division of labour are carried to great perfection, all the bad passions to which man is prone, are restrained by hard labour and low diet, which give him little time or opportunity for the indulgence of them, and subdue the body so much as to check the inclination to them. The introduction of machinery produces an excess of all luxuries as well as conveniences, if the workman continues to labour as hard as he did before ; or if he labours less (as is generally the case) he has much spare time, which is commonly spent in those gratifications which his passions prompt him to. In either case, indulgence, under different forms,

produces a very bad effect on his mind; and the system leads directly to vice and misery.

The opportunities which the artificers in towns enjoy for the education of their children, are certainly very greatly increased since the zeal of the higher orders has so much extended the powers of Schools; but they are still inferior to the advantages which our unpolished rustic possesses for bringing up his family. Labouring for the most part in the country, far from the polluted air and deleterious occupations of factories, he sees his children around him enjoying health and cheerfulness; and if their faculties are not sharpened by the System of extreme activity, emulation, and monitorship, which our modern schools present, they are by no means neglected. He does not rest satisfied with having them taught reading, writing, and accounts, whereby they are to be prepared to get forward in the world; he infuses into their tender minds, the pure and unsophisticated sentiments of Religion which his own heart supplies;—and leaves the contest betwixt Doctrine, faith, and holy zeal, on the one hand, and Piety, good works, and charity, on the other, to be settled by Nature and the village Curate.—Which of these processes is the most likely to form good Citizens, and raise up Children of Immortality, every one must decide for himself. We know too well which of them it is that prevails in our days.

We thus discover a foundation in the necessary structure of all highly civilized communities, for that deterioration of the moral characters of the lower orders, to which we may trace a large portion of that increase of wretchedness and pauperism which we have been lamenting. The division of labour, and the other processes which greatly augment the powers of production, and the means of extending National wealth, contract the intellectual attainments of the individual, and weaken the vigour of the corporeal frame; they destroy those finer sympathies, by which Nature would draw us together in the bands of charity and love; and degrade the moral man into a machine.—It is, accordingly, in large cities, and especially in extensive mercantile and manufacturing towns, that the Poor appear in the most debased and disagreeable condition. Whilst our manufactures have flourished more and more, our poor-rates have increased in proportion; though the wages of the Poor, in the manufacturing districts, are often extravagantly high, they seldom lay any portion by for a time of need; and they appear more regardless of comfort and cleanliness than the poor husbandman who receives, perhaps, not more than half their wages. A character of insolence, and unfeeling pride, prevails among them; and a tendency to political anarchy has frequently manifested itself, which it seems almost impossible

to repress by any moral or religious influence. —The Poor in this situation make wonderful exertions, occasionally, either for the maintenance of their families, when well disposed, or for the pampering of their appetites and passions; but they have not those steady habits of industry, frugality, and sobriety, which exist in a more simple form of society, and which are so essential for warding off the attacks of sickness and poverty. This is a view of the effects of National Prosperity, which we advert to with reluctance; but it is founded upon the principles of civilized life, and the constitution of man— as a selfish, sensual, and short-sighted being; and it accounts for the production of a quantity of misery and vice, which it is to be feared no legislative regulations or individual exertions can perfectly counteract.

The moralist, who delights to contemplate the progress of the human mind, cannot pursue the train of reflections connected with this subject, without painful emotions;—feeling the happy influences of knowledge and refinement in his own breast, he anticipates the unbounded progress of improvement in his fellow-men.— But when he sees vice and misery following so closely in the train of science, arts, and civilization, and arising immediately from them, he inquires whether the means of abridging human

labour are in themselves evils? whether, whilst all improvements in the arts of life—in agriculture, manufactures, and commerce—are rapidly advancing, intellectual, moral and religious improvement may not keep pace with them? whether, whilst we are fully convinced of the advantages arising from the use of machinery, and dwell with delight on the wonderful power which is acquired by means of the division of labour, of increasing the comforts and conveniences of human life, we cannot apply additional checks and restraints, proportioned to that increased disposition to the low vices and passions, which seems to accompany these great advantages?—The man of taste, of information, of inquiry, of intellectual activity, answers that it may be accomplished by giving the poor more instruction, taking more pains with their moral principles, and leading them to prefer innocent amusements and domestic pursuits, to the sensuality of the pot-house, and the society of the club-room. The rational religionist is confident the remedy may be found in the inculcation of more accurate views of Religion and stricter habits of piety. The philanthropist, who views human nature as a compound of good and evil, of virtue and vice, hopes some greater good may be done, than has hitherto been effected by these remedies; but he looks at the actual state of society, and sees that on the whole the bulk of the people are not happier or

more comfortable in proportion as the whole community advances in civilization; he feels disappointment and humiliation;—the mysterious plan of Providence appears to be surrounded with new difficulties, and he is almost tempted to despair of the destinies of the human race.

A great portion of the moral and political evil which we have been delineating, has extended itself through the country as well as in towns, by the modern system of cultivation on a grand scale in large farms; which, though it has very much increased the productive powers of the whole body of farmers, has made them individually worse members of society. Formerly, the spirit of speculation and extreme enterprise belonged to the merchants almost exclusively, but now it is extended to the class of husbandmen; and this has arisen, not from any alteration in their characters, but from the course of events and circumstances which have attended the situation of the country, especially since the commencement of War in 1803. It has since this period produced a very unfavourable change in the characters of the cultivators of our soil, which every friend to his country must deplore.

It cannot be yet ascertained how far the ruinous changes, which the last two years have

produced, particularly in the farming districts, will operate in bringing us back to a better state of things; we may, however, hope that they will be productive in a considerable degree of this good consequence.* The wise design of Providence is apparent, in ordering, that there shall be no evil in this world without its concomitant good; as it is likewise, in providing that every good shall be accompanied by a corresponding inconvenience.

As long as the Landowner could find tenants of large capital and enterprise, to engage in extensive farms, he was induced to let off his

* " A time there was (ere England's griefs began)
 " When every rood of ground maintained its man;
 " For him light labour spread her wholesome store,
 " Just gave what life required, but gave no more.
 " His best companions—innocence and health,
 " And his best riches—ignorance of wealth.
 " But times are altered; Trade's unfeeling train,
 " Usurp the land, and dispossess the swain;" &c.

In such feeling strains did our Poet describe the change which was beginning in England fifty years ago; how would he have finished and heightened the picture, had he lived at this day!—Viewing the greatly increased population, and visible riches of the country, with his philosophic eye; and beholding the beauty and luxuriance of his native fields, with those strong emotions of delight and attachment which warm the bosom of the patriot who has visited the other countries of Europe; in what touching language would he have portrayed the effects of our over-grown prosperity and population, on the character of the peasantry; and lamented that the comfort and well-being of the individuals composing the greater portion of the People, does not keep pace with the power and splendour of the whole!

estates in this way, in preference to the system of small farms; not only because he found less trouble and inconvenience, but also because his late experience had taught him, that his lands were on the whole more highly cultivated; the fences, drains, &c. kept in better order; and the farming stock, and the general system of husbandry, maintained in a superior style.

Whilst the extravagant prices and the waste of War continued, the Proprietor of the soil rejoiced to contemplate the luxuriance of his territories, and congratulated himself on having discovered a more effectual way of improving his revenue, than that pursued by his ancestors. He flattered himself too much;—that which he attributed to his own ingenuity and exertion, appears, for the most part, to have been the result of those peculiar circumstances, into which the Country was thrown by the War. A new order of things has succeeded; and the property in land, which was more stable and promising than any other, in the estimation of the most prudent calculators, has been the first to suffer. The evil will, however, it is to be hoped, work its own cure;—the fatal effects of the late speculative and aggrandizing system are felt universally, and the Country is daily learning in the school of experience, and by a process of painful discipline, lessons of moral and political economy,

which the most impressive discourses, and the most elaborate disquisitions, would fail to inculcate.—We may hope that, ere long, that most important and respectable class of society in England, the Country Gentlemen, will perceive that there is more security and respectability in a great number of small tenants, than in a small number of large ones; and that, ultimately, their own best interests will be promoted by it.—Thus by degrees we may witness the return of that better state of things, which will arise from a more equal distribution of the comforts and enjoyments of life. The extremes of poverty and riches will be gradually lessened; the useful race of English yeomanry restored; the inequalities of rank softened down; and the bonds of society strengthened by a closer union of feelings and interests between the higher and the lower classes.*

As far as the farming part of the community is concerned, we may look to a very favourable effect being produced by the operation of these changes. The time is also arrived, when we

* In the answers to the queries of the board of Agriculture, it is interesting to read the testimony of the Earl of Winchelsea and R. Barclay, Esq. in favour of allowing labourers small lots of land attached to their cottages. It appears that those who are treated in this way, are uniformly the most hard-working, sober, and industrious labourers, and that they never receive any Parish allowance.

may confidently reckon upon some portion of the time and talents of our ministers being directed to the subject of the POOR LAWS, since they have so satisfactorily disposed of the interests and territories of our neighbours. It would, indeed, have been unreasonable and selfish, to expect Government to be very much concerned with the dry and uninteresting details of domestic regulations, when they were engaged in settling the destinies of Europe; and it must be admitted, that the People at large have never shown too much anxiety about their own fate, so warm and disinterested has been their zeal for our Allies, and for the re-establishment of the old system of things in Europe. At length, however, the comfort and well-being of Englishmen begins to be a matter of real concern to themselves. *Non nunc agitur de Sociorum injuriâ; Libertas et anima nostra in dubio est.*

So great an ardour has warmed the breasts of some of our Statesmen and Nobles, (spiritual as well as temporal,) that they have convened an *extra Parliament at the London Tavern*, and adopted resolutions, and a plan of relief, which ought to immortalize their names. A grateful Country will enrol them on the splendid list of its Benefactors.

Ere long they will again assemble in the chambers of St. Stephen's; and then we may

hope to witness that attention on their part to the condition of the lower orders, which will end in the revision and alteration of the POOR-LAWS. — It is difficult, however, to conceive how any modification of these statutes can avail us. That they are carelessly and shamefully administered is obvious; but that they are also fundamentally bad in themselves, is now decidedly the opinion, I believe, of those who have paid the most attention to the subject. We are becoming sensible, by woful and long experience, of the dependence and idleness which they foster on the one hand, and of the oppression and insensibility which they create on the other; and that their natural tendency is, to alienate the minds of the lower classes from their superiors, and to extinguish the honest feelings of self-respect, which the lowest Peasant feels when his bread is bought by the sweat of his brow. By lessening the necessity for great exertion, they counteract that first law of nature, which the God of nature has confirmed and expressed in the plainest language—“ *He that will not work, neither shall he eat;*” and at this moment they are degrading the minds of tens of thousands of our fellow-subjects, who, striving in vain to maintain their families by hard labour, find themselves at length compelled to resort to the receipt of Parish allowance, in company with the idle and profligate. For it is notorious, in every Parish in England, that these latter are continually

receiving the same support from the poor-rates, as the unfortunate but industrious man who is disabled by sickness, the pressure of the times, or a large and young family, from providing a complete maintenance.

The history of the present times affords us the most striking proofs of the baneful operation of the poor-rates, in estranging the minds of the labouring classes from their employers, by the effect they have on the price of wages. In the populous towns of Bolton, Stockport, &c. where the owners of houses, &c. pay 10s in the pound for poor-rates, the wages of the weavers are frequently as low as 6s to 8s a week; and the man who receives them thinks himself perfectly justified in complaining to his master of his low wages; and who shall say he is not, when he cannot live where he is, and is prevented by the law of settlements from seeking a better market for his labour?—But he receives as much more from the Parish, which comes in a great measure out of the pockets of the same persons—the manufacturers who employ him—who have paid him his low wages. Is it not clear, that if his employers did not pay these rates, they would pay the poor weavers whom they employ so much more wages; and that they would then be paying less than they actually do at present, in as much as the expenses of collecting and

distributing the parish-rates would be saved. The present system affords no relief to the poor industrious manufacturer; its only effect appears to be to give employment and influence to a number of magistrates, attorneys, parish officers, overseers, constables, &c. &c. while it encourages the idle to deceive and prevaricate without end, and fills society with irregularity and confusion. If it had not existed, many who now depend upon the parish might have possessed one or two hundred pounds; the equalization of property would have been better maintained, and much of the mischief prevented which we are now deploring.

Thus does the perverseness of legislative interference degrade the mind and the affections of the lower orders, and put man in hostility to his fellow-man. The poor artificer becomes discontented with his employer, and disaffected towards Government, in consequence of a fall in the price of his wages, generally the result of circumstances which neither his master nor Government have created or can remove. But the misguided sufferers cannot discern this; and their blindness is confirmed by the wrong notions inculcated on such occasions by the disaffected or ill-advised amongst the higher classes. Hence arise those frequent disturbances in our great manufacturing districts,

accompanied by wasteful and predatory warfare against machinery, and those absurd Petitions to Parliament to establish *a minimum of wages*, which have been preferred by the Manufacturers of Bolton and other towns.

The above remarks are applicable only to those who have health and strength to work. It may be said that the laws ought to be preserved so far as to ensure a provision against the infirmities of age or sickness; and that they may be modified in such a manner, as to compel every man to pay to the Parish a portion of his wages whilst he is working, upon which he may draw in the time of sickness and want of employment; and to prevent any man of an able and sound body from receiving allowance from the Parish.— This object is, however, already attained, by means of private Benefit Clubs and Friendly Societies, in a more easy, effectual, and beneficial manner than it could possibly be by any legislative regulation.* They have been increasing

* The interference of Government by any system of Saving Banks, is to be regarded with jealousy and fear. One evil, however, is attendant upon these Societies, which is powerfully felt at this moment in many large towns—the facility which they afford for Combinations amongst workmen, to keep up the prices of wages. It is to be feared no human precautions can be availing to remove this inconvenience wholly, and that it must always exist in a considerable degree, even in the best constituted societies. In Liverpool, the trade of ship-building and repairing, is much injured by the carpenters

throughout the country during the last century ; they have done much good to the poor, and only want the encouragement and advice of individuals in the higher classes, to render them more completely what they were originally intended to be.

It has been urged by the advocates of our poor-laws, (a code quite peculiar to this country,) that if they were strictly enforced, the inconvenience and evils now attending them, would not be experienced; in as much as they require the Overseers to find employment and raw materials, as flax, hemp, wool, iron, &c. to work up into manufactures. But it is obvious, that if there be a *want of labourers* in any trade, it is not necessary for the Overseers of the Poor to point it out; it will be sufficiently indicated to those who are willing to work; and want and hunger will urge them to labour much more effectually than the Overseers can do. If, on the other hand, the market is *overstocked* with labour in any particular trade, it would be only increasing and protracting

refusing to work for 4s a day, whilst in other parts in the neighbourhood, they are advertising for employment at 2s 6d and 3s a day. Many of these deluded artificers are in consequence unemployed, and they are maintained in a wretched state of lazy dependance—getting some support from their Clubs and Benefit Society; and though they persist, month after month, in refusing to work at their own trade for 4s a day, or permitting any others to do it in this town, they are going about to ask for charitable assistance, or for work on the new docks, where they would only receive 2s a day wages.

the mischief, for the Parish to set its idle hands to work in the same trade. This has been pointed out so frequently, that the use of *Workhouses* is almost discontinued, and *money* is now paid to the unemployed or idle; for the law says, that in England *none shall suffer want*, however improvident they may be. It is truly surprising that in an enlightened age and nation, such regulations should still be countenanced by the Legislature, after their evil tendency has been exposed by intelligent writers, from the time of De Foe to Mr. Malthus: and it is a matter of astonishment that they have not produced even a greater degree of mischief and confusion than they appear to have done. All the provisions of our poor-laws are as injurious to the Poor themselves, as they are pernicious to Society;—they break down the manly port and spirit of independence, which characterized the Englishman in the humblest walks of life, when he could maintain himself by his own industry; they are a direct encouragement of laziness and imprudence, and a bounty upon vice and profligacy;—thus increasing the misery and poverty which they were intended to mitigate, and reducing millions to the abject condition of paupers, who, if industry and frugality were left to find their own level in society, would be independent members of the community. Happier they who are the slaves of a *humane despotism*, as are the poor Peasants of

Russia, than those who are so unfortunate as to become the humbled and debased creatures of such an oppressive *Code of humanity*.*

It would not indeed be proper to abolish the Poor-laws suddenly; and it would be impossible to do without them in the present state of general distress. They are probably the only effectual means of compelling the rich to maintain the poor who cannot find work, and to prevent them from stealing and starving to such an extent as to disorganize the whole social system; and they are perhaps operating as a merited punishment of

* The Committee of Mendicity have examined witnesses in the late Session of Parliament, without producing any result; but it is to be hoped they will resume the subject, and adopt some plan for diminishing and gradually removing this national evil. Those who do not consider all French notions on the subject of Legislation as bad and dangerous, will be forcibly struck with the opinion of the Committee which their Chamber formed to consider about the establishment of a Poor's Rate in France; indeed all persons may safely read it, for it was promulgated in the good days of the unfortunate Louis XVI. It is thus expressed — “ *L'exemple de l'Angleterre est une grande et importante leçon pour nous; car indépendamment des vices qu'elle nous présente, et d'une dépense monstrueuse, et d'un encouragement nécessaire à la fainéantise, elle nous découvre la plaie politique de l'Angleterre la plus dévorante, qu'il est également dangereux pour sa tranquillité et son bonheur, de détruire ou de laisser subsister.* ”

Fainéantism is a vice so foreign to the English character, and peculiar to the French, that some other term ought to have been substituted. In spite even of the Poor Laws, I believe it has hitherto made but small progress in this country, and it is scarcely possible to find an English word that fully conveys the sentiment which it expresses. In France the art of *doing nothing* is an important study, and very generally cultivated; in England it is taught only in our *Workhouses*.

those who employ large bodies of workmen for not doing what lay in their power in the day of prosperity, to put their dependents in the way of saving something, and by the exercise of prudence and temperance providing against the season of calamity.

If all the Workhouses, Poor-houses, and Orphan-houses in England were suffered to go to decay, can any one imagine, that the poor and wretched inhabitants of them, who are unable to maintain themselves, would be neglected? The real charity and extensive desire to do good, which prevail in this country, forbid the supposition. On the contrary, I believe their situation would be bettered, in as much as many who can work, would thereby be compelled to work, and the incompetent would be better provided. The sure refuge of vice and idleness being removed, thousands would exercise those moral restraints over their own conduct, the general practice of which, the precepts of the pulpit, as well as the suggestions of reason, have hitherto failed to enforce;—tens of thousands would recover their lost powers of exertion; and all the Poor would make those strenuous efforts to better their condition, which form the strongest support of the social system. But it is not necessary to resort to violent or precipitate measures; the evils may

be remedied by a gradual and gentle process; a period may be fixed, one or two years hence, (in the way which Mr. Malthus has proposed,) after which no children, legitimate or illegitimate, shall receive parish allowance;—and as no confusion or interference with existing regulations need to accompany such a restriction, no person would have any right to complain. An immediate check would thus be easily applied to the extension of the mischief, by discouraging rash marriages in the lower classes, and the multiplication of illicit births; and the ultimate removal of the monstrous evil complained of, would be ensured before the present generation has passed away.*

* I cannot resist the inclination to transcribe Mr. Malthus's judicious remarks, on the manner in which our existing laws for the maintenance of the Poor injure their character, and estrange their minds from an attachment to their superiors.

“ During periods of scarcity, the Poor are told that the parish is obliged to provide for them. This they naturally conceive is a rich source of supply; and when they are offered any kind of food to which they are not accustomed, they consider it as a breach of obligation in the Parish, and as proceeding, not from the hard law of necessity, from which there is no appeal, but from the injustice and hard-heartedness of the higher classes of society, against which they would wish to appeal to the right of the strongest. The language which they generally make use of on these occasions, is, ‘ See what stuff *they* want to make us eat, I wonder how *they* would like it *themselves*; I should like to see some of *them* do a day's work upon it.’ The words *they* and *them*, generally refer to the Parliament, the Lord Mayor, the Justices of the Parish, and in general to all the higher classes of society. Both the irritation of mind, and the helplessness in expedients during the pressure of want, arise in this instance from the wretched system of governing

Mr. Cobbett, in discussing the subject of the Poor-laws, (in his Paper dated 5th October,) maintains, that it is *utterly impossible to abolish them*; and, in his strong language, exclaims—

“ Do gentlemen really imagine they can persuade
 “ or compel *two millions of the People to submit*
 “ *to starvation?*” Then he informs his readers, he is aware there are projects on foot for preventing the Poor from marrying!—and pursuing an argument so well calculated *ad captandum*, goes on thus—“ What a horrid state must that country
 “ be in, where men can patiently listen to a project for *preventing children from being born*—
 “ for producing celibacy—for encouraging a state
 “ of life which has always been held in disrepute
 “ —for saying to the young men and women of
 “ the country, ‘ *be not fathers and mothers!*’ —
 “ We are come to a pretty pass, when we are to
 “ be coolly advised to set our faces against the
 “ *very first principle of our natures.*”——Such is the reasoning, with which this *Child of nature* combats the principles that Mr. Malthus has endeavoured to inculcate in this country, (as Quesnay and the other Economists had done before him,) in favour of restraining the Poor from

“ too much.——Were the Poor once taught, by the abolition
 “ of the Poor-laws, and a proper knowledge of their real situation, to depend more upon themselves, we might rest secure
 “ that they would be fruitful enough in resources; and that the
 “ evils which were absolutely irremediable, they would bear
 “ with the fortitude of men, and the resignation of Christians.”

entering too early and inconsiderately into the married state.—Is not Mr. Cobbett sufficiently acquainted with the system of nature, to know that whilst she calls upon mankind to “increase and multiply,” she informs them, that if they follow their propensities in this respect with intemperance and excess, they will inflict misery upon themselves, their offspring, and the society whereof they are members?—Has he not read, in the history of mortality, that nature ordains poverty and wretchedness inevitably to follow the man who gives the rein to his appetites and passions? Nature has not only given us *animal passions*, but a strong spirit of *Indolence*, which operates equally in civilized as in savage life, rendering it almost impossible for the best regulated communities (excepting in new and vastly extensive territories like America) to keep the children of the Poor free from diseases and rags. If we consult *Nature*, we find that in the fruitful and highly populous empires of the East, as China, Thibet, &c. these two principles reign together in so supreme a degree, that it is no longer deemed inhuman to destroy such a portion of the newborn children, as may keep down the population to the means of subsistence; and that even in England, and other countries where the fields are cultivated to the utmost, the consumption is continually gaining ground upon the production of food.

The propensity to marry is not so universal or powerful as the desire of food and raiment; *Nature*, however, is the parent of both; and if her dictates alone are to be followed by the Poor man, he may do many things that will afford him present gratification at the expense of his neighbour's comfort. He may not only seat himself uninvited, at the great feast which Nature has prepared, but bring in a train of hungry children. He may come to the *Champion of Nature*, whilst he is enjoying the fruits of his talents and industry at Botley; and tell him that he has for some years been labouring hard from morning to night upon his fine estate, without saving any thing, but he sees no longer any reason why he should continue so to do, whilst his employer pays him only 12s or 15s a week, and spends his own time in finding fault with our own Government, and praising that of America. —He may inform him that Nature orders that he who sows ought also to reap, and may demand an *equal distribution* of the fruits of that rich domain; or at least that its owner should impart the profits of *his Register*, in order to enable more of the cottagers “*to become fathers and mothers.*” How the Philosopher of Botley would entertain the proposition, I cannot decide; but one may presume that *Common Sense* and *Nature* would suggest to him some such reply as the following.—“My good neighbour!

“ you are quite at sea upon this business. It is
 “ true, indeed, a *great change* must take place,
 “ and *that* before you and I are many months
 “ older, but you cannot entertain so *puerile an*
 “ *idea*, as to wish to break that happy union that
 “ subsists between us. I am not the author of
 “ the irregularity of which you complain, any
 “ more than I am of the hail-storm that unroofs
 “ your cottage, or the disease that carries off your
 “ pigs. Go to your Cannings, and your Ponsolobys,
 “ and to William Gifford, and Gilray the caric-
 “ ture-man, and the other men with empty heads
 “ and soft white hands;—you are much too intelli-
 “ gent and clear-sighted not to discern that it is
 “ *they* who get their bread by the *sweat of your*
 “ *brow*;—whilst you are compelled to labour with
 “ the mattock and the spade, and I work with my
 “ head and my pen for the good of my country, they
 “ devour the fruits of our industry. Do not then
 “ talk to me about participating in my Rents and
 “ my Register, and taking the revenues which are
 “ derived from my own exertions, and spun out of
 “ my own brains;—away with such a couple of
 “ dozen of remedies;—and go and ask the Ellën-
 “ boroughs, and the young Roses, and the hireling
 “ Editor of the Times, for a more equal distribu-
 “ tion of the gifts of Nature.”——

But it is time to finish this discussion; the
Advocate of Nature cannot be ignorant, that

Providence has decreed an eternal struggle between our inclinations and our interests, or those of society; that a perpetual warfare is carried on, by the appointment of Divine wisdom, between the good and evil principles of our nature; and a balance of powers established in a manner inscrutable to our comprehensions. Civilized society and social order rescue thousands from the dominion of want, which would pursue and destroy them in a state of barbarism. The Savage who wanders in the desert, and follows without control the guidance of *Nature*, is infinitely more the slave of want and suffering, than the poor man in this country; and the consequence is, that the population of uncivilized nations remains comparatively stationary. The quick sense of pain and misery in refined communities, makes us fancy those things to be great evils which the American Indian would be little affected by; and we must not, therefore, charge civilized society with being the author of the evil. The powers of civilization, however, are controlled and limited; and their advantages alloyed by restraints upon personal liberty in the best regulated communities, which are frequently very oppressive and disagreeable. So the institution of marriage is calculated greatly to ameliorate the condition of man; and certainly accelerates very much the progress of population; but it is attended with its peculiar inconveniences and

privations; and perhaps they who enter into it may conceive they are no more exempt from suffering than those who are excluded from it.

Since we find, then, that Nature is not a guide to be implicitly followed on this subject, and that even the sacred bond of marriage is not of magic power to ensure food for its hungry offspring, and subvert the law of human life, which proclaims that *population always shall increase faster than food*;—let us lead the ignorant Poor to consult the principles of religion, and the laws of the society in which they live. Let them be advised that they cannot claim the privilege of indulging the agreeable propensity to marry, when they know they are unable to maintain a family by the utmost exertion; let them be warned, that it is the height of injustice to their more provident neighbours, to compel them to support the children which they bring into the world. Or let them be advertised, that they must contribute to a fund, for the maintenance of their destitute children, a certain portion of their wages, from the moment they become fathers and mothers. If such admonitions and cautions were inculcated by the higher classes, and especially by those who have influence on the sentiments and conduct of the lower, the latter might be led to exercise those salutary restraints upon their passions, which

would render the intercourse of the sexes, even in the humblest walks of life, more chaste and refined; and much of the vice and wretchedness that spreads itself through this class of society would be prevented.

But changes in the sentiments of mankind, upon questions of morality, are more frequently the result of experience, or even what appears accident, than of the lessons of reason, or the instructions of philosophy; and in the present age, when the adherence to opinions and prejudice is conspicuous in maintaining prescriptive views in politics and religion, favourable to the endurance of the greatest evils, we are continually admonished rather to bear with composure the

“ Ills we do endure,

“ Than fly to others that we know not of.”

We must not therefore expect any very rapid change in the public sentiment on this subject;— unless it should be countenanced by some one in authority; in which event it will instantly receive the impulse which fashion is continually giving to opinion, and become as favourite a doctrine as it has been unpopular.

Although, upon this subject, no change should be wrought in the public mind, there is another,

in which we may indulge the hope, that the adherence to fashion will be overcome or moulded by the power of religion, and that sounder principles will prevail;—I refer to the *Education of the children of the Poor*. The system of Mr. Lancaster was received with so much avidity, (especially since it was patronised by our beneficent Sovereign;) there was such an air of novelty and liberality, and so much real good in it, that it spread throughout the kingdom, and was adopted in every town as a perfect plan, without the apprehension of any evil or deficiency attending it;—that of Dr. Bell was viewed by too many amongst the most enlightened, as only acceptable in as much as it was borrowed from Lancaster, and objectionable on account of the exclusive connexion which it maintained with the religion of the church of England. It cannot be denied, that great good has been done by the numerous institutions on the Lancasterian principles;—the rising generation have acquired in them habits of subordination, order and cleanliness, together with a quickness and variety of mental attainments unknown before. But these will not finish and mature their characters as good men, without other aids; they may not be duly impressed with the importance of exercising the duties of temperance, moderation, and contentment, during their abode on earth, and of preparing for a better state, though their infant

minds are thoroughly initiated into the arts of reading, writing, and arithmetic. As every thing has its day in this age of mental improvements, and as religious feelings are rather fashionable at present, we may hope that the *religious* and *moral system* will be introduced more generally into our schools; and thence we may witness a change in the conduct and character of the lower orders, which will go as far in correcting the evils which we have been enlarging upon, as the imperfections of our social institutions will permit. At present the rage is all for the production of talent, and rousing active exertion; knowledge is invited to unlock her stores to the Poor and the indigent, as well as to the rich and the great; and many, even of the most enlightened friends of the Poor, appear more zealous to instruct them how to distinguish themselves for learning and acuteness, than to cultivate the amiable dispositions and the pious affections.

The experiment is still in progress, and it is probable that the timely application of other principles and views will by degrees correct this deficiency; if not, the character of the rising generation must be irreparably injured. It would be better that our peasants should remain poor, and our manufacturers unable to read, than that

they should gain riches and knowledge, at the expense of the consolations and hopes of religion.*

* The great difficulty in combining *religious instruction* with the general Education of the children of the Poor, is the abstaining from those Dogmas which Christians of almost every sect and denomination consider essential to salvation, and which those who do not go quite so far as this, must feel a constant tendency to inculcate.—Good Churchmen, as well as the zealous Dissenter, can scarcely avoid infusing into the minds of the children some sectarian tenets;—and the more attached to their own communion, the more inclined they will be to think that their pupils will not be in the right way unless they go to their Church. It is in vain to tell such persons that children cannot comprehend the mysterious language of their respective Creeds; that even the best educated are for the most part indebted to birth or accident for their peculiar views of religion; that if any particular sect had really a decided preponderance of argument and evidence in its favour, it would have ere this prevailed throughout Christendom, or at least very much superseded that diversity of faith which now exists; that whilst physical and moral Truths are not confined to one country or class of society, but are equally acknowledged and felt by Heathens, Jews, and Christians, by enlightened and diligent inquirers in Spain, Italy, and Germany, as well as in France or England, the doctrines of Religion, and the different sects into which it is divided, appear to be arranged under particular Climates and Provinces; and that the divisions of Kingdoms and Rivers constitute in general the Boundaries which separate Popery from Protestantism, Presbyterianism from Calvinism, and so through the variety of sects into which Christians are divided.—It is to be feared that Zeal for the *true Faith* and the *Doctrines* of Christianity, will in the generality of mankind always surpass Enthusiasm for the *practical duties* which it inculcates—of Charity, Benevolence, Forbearance, and Brotherly Love. It is an affecting but important truth, that the diversities and contrarieties of faith appear in a great measure necessary to awaken and keep alive a strong sense of religion in the breasts of the generality of mankind; but one cannot help wishing that these differences might be gradually divested more and more of that selfishness, exclusion and suspicion, which are fostered in the ignorant, by an attachment to particular Dogmas.

Happier far the poor cottager, who lives and
dies contented in his humble sphere,

“ Who knows, and knows no more, his Bible true;—

“ And in that charter reads, with sparkling eyes,

“ His title to a treasure in the skies,”

than the expert mechanic, or the most intelli-
gent artizan, who has raised himself by his
skill and talents into a superior walk of life, but
who thinks more of the means of his advance-
ment and his superiority to his neighbours,
than of cultivatnig the virtues of piety, humility,
and kindness.



Having thus, Sir, investigated the causes of
our unparalleled distresses, and endeavoured to
develope the manner in which they are to be
most effectually mitigated; having shown that
as they were occasioned by the overstrained
and extravagant system of the War, they can
only be effectually corrected by the pacific virtues
of economy, moderation, and patient industry;
let us examine what may be stated on the bright
side of the question, and what consolatory pros-

pects we may trace in the actual appearance and state of things.—It often happens that our fears, whilst they magnify our dangers and difficulties, prevent us from discerning those sources of comfort and of hope which our situation offers.

In considering the present crisis only as affecting our Trade and Finances, we shall find some animating and consolatory views.

In the first place, the recent and great advance in the prices of Wheat and all descriptions of Grain, must greatly meliorate the condition of the Farmer and the Landowner.—The tenant of the land has been entirely ruined, in many instances, by the low prices at which he has been compelled to sell two successive Crops; and so far the evil (dreadful as it is in magnitude, and lamentable in its consequences to the individuals) is to be viewed as having exhausted itself. A general reduction in rents has been the consequence; and there is a prospect of the new occupier of the land obtaining a due return for his capital and labour. From early alarms being excited respecting the crops, owing to the want of sun and warmth to ripen them in the last summer, the prices of corn have gradually been advancing for some time; and they are now so high, that the Farmer will probably receive as

much, or more, for two-thirds or three-fourths only of an average crop, as he would have done had he gathered a full one. If he only secures one hundred bushels of Wheat, and sells then at 15s or 16s, he receives more than if he had got a crop of one hundred and fifty bushels, and and sold it for only 8s or 10s a bushel.—He is encouraged to employ the poor labourers around him; and hope, which is best medicine to the sufferer, bids him and his dependants to look forwards to better days.*

* The actual result of the Harvest cannot yet be ascertained, though we are arrived at the last week in October. In the North of England, in a great part of Scotland, and in the West and North of Ireland, a considerable portion of the Crops are still unhoused; a very large quantity of which must rot and be totally destroyed, in consequence of the wet and cold weather which has continued with little intermission to the present time; and a considerable quantity of the best fed Grain has been sprouting, by which process much of the Wheat that is saved will be rendered almost unfit for making Bread, and the Barley for Malting.—Those who are conversant with the subject, and the most accurately informed as to the result of the Harvest generally throughout the kingdom, are of opinion that we cannot expect, on the most favourable view, three-fourths of the Crop that we had last year, and that it may prove still more deficient. The reports from different districts, indeed, vary very materially, (as is always the case on this question of so much interest,) both as to the quantity and the quality of the Grain; but in almost every part we find, that the new Wheats, being lean and in very bad condition, sell for a fifth or a fourth part less than the old Wheat, and the proportion of good well-fed Grain in the present Crop must necessarily be very small.—On the whole, there seems reason to apprehend, that, notwithstanding the improved state of our Agriculture, and the extensive provision arising from the greatly increased growth of Potatoes, (now cultivated so largely in all parts of Great Britain as well as Ireland,) we

Thus the agricultural interest will be relieved, and the Farmer having felt so severely the fatal effects of the system which has been pursued, will, it may be hoped, adopt every precaution of economy, prudence, and moderation, which his experience can suggest, and his late misfortunes have so strongly inculcated.

If it be asked, what is to prevent a recurrence of the same mischief, and a repetition of the misery, should the Harvest prove abundant the next year? it can only be said the evil must cure itself again, in the same manner it has done, by the Landlord and the Tenant dividing the loss. But the over-growth of Corn is already very materially diminished; and it is a thing much to be deprecated, that the prices of Corn

may find ourselves in a more precarious situation, after all the Crops are gathered, than we were in the years 1782—1783, or in the alarming scarcity of 1800—1801. In the latter of these periods we were at war, and yet we imported as much as four million quarters of Corn, besides Flour and Rice, (see Appendix C,) principally from the territories of our Enemy, or Countries in alliance with him, as Prussia, Poland, &c.—The accounts of the Crops in those parts of Europe are not unfavourable; but in the Netherlands there will probably be no Corn to spare; and in France the Harvest has been so much injured, that the Government has prohibited the export of it; and there is a great uncertainty as to what quantity of Wheat and Flour we may be able to get from America.—Our own surplus from the abundant crops of last year, has been prematurely exhausted by the sales which the farmers were forced to make at very low prices, and which might have been prevented by a small temporary Loan from Government,

in this Country should be permanently kept, by Laws and Regulations, so much above the average natural price of the other European Nations, as the Country Gentlemen who fixed the Import Restriction at 80s, would have it. The impolicy of this system, as it affects the general welfare of the country, is still not generally admitted, though it is evident that the subject is becoming better understood; and it is probable the Landowners themselves, with whom, as independent legislators, the continuance or the alteration of the present Restriction ought to rest, will discover before long, that however it may benefit their present incomes and the situation of their tenants, it must have a most prejudicial influence upon their future and permanent interests. The regulation appears indeed to have done a temporary service to the country, by preventing so great a decrease in the growth of corn as there would have been without it, and thus diminishing the evils of the present scarcity; or rather, we may perhaps say, the bad harvest has remedied the evil consequences which might have resulted to the nation from the undue encouragement given by the Corn Bill to the growth of this article. Its inadequacy, as a means of supporting the prices of Grain, (as it was intended to do,) has been proved by experience; and it is a comfortable reflection, that no law can be devised for accomplishing this object to the

extent which was contemplated by the Act. It is not meant by this remark to imply that the landed interest ought not to be supported; I am of opinion they ought, in as much as Agriculture has stood more in need of support since the conclusion of the War, than any other branch of industry. The manufacturers and merchants are more independent than the Farmers; and if Government will leave them to themselves, they will repair the want of demand for their productions in one quarter, by finding new vents in another; if the sale of hardware, cloth, or hosiery, falls off at home, they will send more to foreign markets, and thus relieve themselves until the home-market recovers. But for the English Farmer there is only one certain and regular market—that of his own country; and having grown, in consequence of the War, more than that market can take off in the present state of the country, it is proper that he should be assisted for a short period, till the consumption shall rise to a level with the production. The chances of a market for our surplus corn on the Continent of Europe, are not to be reckoned upon; because the poor nations of Europe will always grow enough of this article, cheaper than we can possibly do, to supply the irregularities of crops, and occasional bad harvests in particular districts of the Continent. But as soon as our Trade and Commerce shall regain their former

activity, (and we may be assured they will recover sooner from the effects of the late shock, than the other branches of Industry,) they will relieve the agricultural interests in the only effectual way. In the mean time, all that could be expected would be, that the import restriction price of Corn, which has been fixed by the alacrity of the Country Gentlemen rather too high, should be reduced *pari passu* as the government reduces the expenditure of the nation. In this way the import price might be gradually brought down to 63s a quarter again in three or four years; and in that interval, the various interests which are differently affected by the operation of the Corn bill, would each bear their proper share of an evil, which the War and the course of events, have inflicted with greater severity upon the agricultural than the other classes. But it must always be detrimental to a rich, populous, manufacturing, and highly luxurious nation like England, to attempt to compete with the poor countries of Europe in the growth of Corn. By being constantly dependant upon them for some portion of her consumption of this article, she will always ensure a steady supply at more regular prices than on the plan of growing all for herself; and eventually the Landowner will be a gainer, because the population and high prices of the country, can only be maintained by an active and prosperous state of Commerce and Manufactures.

In the next place, we may remark, that as the distress which has befallen our Manufacturers was mainly owing to the farmers and peasantry being disabled, by their poverty, from purchasing the same accommodations they used to do, we may expect they will by degrees see their best Customers return to them, not only for the articles requisite to keep up their stock of agricultural implements, but for those various domestic utensils and little luxuries which they have been lately unable to purchase; and the Industry of the Towns and of the Country will then mutually raise up and invigorate each other, upon principles more consonant with the permanent welfare and happiness of all classes of the community than have been acted upon during the War. "The great Commerce of all civilized states, "is their *internal Trade*."——But an extended *foreign Commerce* must continue an object of the greatest importance to this Country; nothing, indeed, can prevent its always being of immense extent; and the same circumstances which have conspired in so extraordinary a manner to depress our Manufactures and Commerce, are now operating indirectly, though slowly and by a severe process, to re-establish them on a surer foundation. The prices at which we have supplied the markets of the world have been so low, and they continue so much beneath what other Countries still can sell their commodities for, that the greatest

manufacturing districts in the European Continent resound with lamentations for the decay brought on them by the glut of English goods of all sorts, and with petitions from the People to prohibit them by Law.*—Some of the most important of the manufactories of the United States of America likewise, which had been carried to so surprising an extent in 1812 to 1814, that if the War had continued longer, so as to exclude our competition, they would have been completely established, are represented, by late accounts, as going fast to ruin.

It is true, our weavers and spinners will no longer have the advantage of that Premium of twenty and thirty per cent, which they derived, during the War, (as we have before explained,) from the Government not being able to pay their Foreign expenditure without this sacrifice in exchange upon the Bills; but, as the Nation paid it then, they are enabled to save it now. Commerce will not yield such sudden and brilliant returns as frequently presented themselves whilst England was the carrier of the World; but it will be steadily and progressively improving, as the devastation and poverty of the War yield to the cheerful industry, and the reviving effects of universal Peace. The only legitimate foundation of Commerce is Barter, or *an Exchange of equivalents*; and this can

* See Appendix D.

only be fully attained and preserved, when the industry of every nation is unembarrassed, and that freedom and mutual confidence restored, which are incompatible with a state of extended warfare.

The Trade of Great Britain during the War, was a kind of Monopoly; and on that account was prodigious; but if mankind are not strangely perverted from the character which Nature has impressed upon them, we may anticipate so great an extension of the Trade of the world, if Peace continue, as will in a few years give this Country a greater amount than even the monopoly of the War conferred, and establish it on a basis much more satisfactory and secure: "The prosperity of one Country
 "is so far from being incompatible with that of
 "another, as ignorant and unthinking people
 "imagine, that I am persuaded it very much
 "promotes it."*

* I am here tempted to adduce the judicious remarks of Mr. Huskisson upon this subject, extracted from his Tract on the state of our Currency in 1810.

"We may rest assured, that it is not in the nature of Commerce to enrich one party at the expense of the other. This is a purpose at which, if it were practicable, we ought not to aim; and which, if we aimed at it, we could not accomplish. Let us not then disdain a virtue, which we perforce must practise. The boast of wealth, growing out of unequal advantages, would be a vulgar boast, even if it could, in the nature of things, rest on a real foundation. Our legitimate pride should consist, not in the superiority of the means with which Providence has blessed us, for the improvement and

Such is the fundamental Principle of Commerce, which I have presented in the words of our countryman Dr. A. Smith, and which the most enlightened writers have inculcated. As the peculiar situation of Europe, however, during the War, operated to disguise and conceal this important Truth, it may not be without its use to enforce and illustrate it, with a reference to our actual condition and prospects.

In the last years of the War, our Exports amounted annually to sixty millions and upwards,* whereas, at the commencement of the War, in 1793, they never exceeded eighteen or twenty millions. This increase cannot be contemplated without sentiments of exultation, as it indicates the stupendous growth of our prosperity. It is not, however, to be regarded as a fair and accurate measure of increased national wealth, for reasons which have been hinted at in former pages;

“ extension of our Commerce, but in the consciousness that those means cannot be employed for purposes purely selfish, and that we do not desire so to employ them! Our national character is to be exalted in the eyes of Foreigners, not by a self-complacent display of our own prosperity, but by showing to the surrounding nations, that they have an interest in that Prosperity; and that we prize it the more, not because we believe it to be exclusive, but because we know it to be communicable. Our true policy would be to profess, as the object and guide of our Commercial System, that which every man who has studied the subject must know to be the true principle of Commerce—the interchange of reciprocal and equivalent benefit.”

* See Appendix C.

the increase of the circulating medium raised the prices of every thing so much, that if we had valued our Exports of 1815, by the prices of 1793, they would not, perhaps, have amounted to more than forty millions; and from this a fourth or a fifth part might be deducted for that portion of them which was the produce of the Colonies of the Belligerents, deposited in our warehouses in *Entrepôt*, swelling our returns, and leaving some profit to this Country, but not yielding that profit which the united produce of our soil and industry commands. Our Exports of *British articles* appear, however, to be double what they were before the War; we will state them, in round numbers, at forty millions. We have seen how the exchange, not only in Europe but all the World over, were against us; take it at a thirty-three per cent in the late years of the War, and we shall reduce this forty millions considerably. It is true, the Manufacturers and Ship-owners gained; but this was not a clear gain to the Country; for, as we have before explained, this Bounty of thirty-three per cent was paid by the Government, in the increased amount of Bills drawn for foreign subsidies and military expenses.

Let us not then deceive ourselves by the absurd notion that we have had, or ever can enjoy, the exclusive benefits of Commerce. I

repeat the language of Mr. Huskisson—" It is "not in the nature of Commerce to enrich one " party at the expense of the other." Looking back upon the course and extent of our Trade during the War, we are not to flatter ourselves that the sixty or seventy millions which we exported, and the fifty or sixty millions which we imported, annually, in the last periods, are fair criterions of our increased Commerce. Nor can we at this moment, whilst we are recovering from the forced and unnatural state in which our Exports and Imports were placed by the War, boast that we are gainers by a supposed Balance of Trade, by the high rate of Exchanges, and the influx of Gold and Silver which we are daily receiving. In whatever situation our trade may be, whether good or bad, extensive or otherwise; whatever appearances the returns of the Custom-house may present, *our Importations must in fact always, on the whole, be equal to our Exportations.* They cannot be otherwise for a continuance;—the *Balance of Trade in favour of ourselves*, and against those with whom we carry it on, is an impossibility; at least it cannot remain so for any length of time. If it does actually exist for a short period, it is in fact unfavourable, rather than favourable to the Country that boasts of it. Such is the principle of Commerce, which is simply a *Barter*, in the most refined as well as the most rude societies,

however concealed or disguised by the technical terms and usages of Merchants; and so strong is the impulse with which it inspires man to discover equivalents, alike for his own wants as for those of his fellow-man, who invites him to the exchange, that no Country can boast of the *Balance of Trade* being in its favour permanently; in proportion as it becomes more favourable to the one party than to the other, it must diminish in that quarter, and be diverted into other channels.—The accumulation of wealth has no doubt been wonderfully great in this Country, during the last twenty years, whilst the fairest parts of Europe have been impoverished and laid waste. But in proportion to the increase and growth of our Trade, has been that of the other parts of the Globe with which we have carried it on. As the Enemy cut off our intercourse with France, Holland, and Italy, in the commencement of the War, our connexion with Germany and the Baltic powers was extended; and Russia benefited in so surprising a degree by her trade with Great Britain, that it is astonishing she should have been tempted to relinquish it. But when the course of events drew that power first into league with Bonaparte, and subsequently to contend with him on her own territory, the Commerce of England extended itself to the Spanish Peninsula, and the provinces of Greece and Turkey. In the mean

time, it grew and flourished in North and South America; and conferred its numerous blessings, with unexampled rapidity and success, upon those colonies of Spain and Portugal which had begun to breathe the air of Freedom and Independence; laying a foundation of friendly intercourse with them, which, at the same time that it increases our trade, will do more than any thing else in spreading Arts and Civilization through those long enslaved and benighted Regions. Thus it appears, that in proportion as our intercourse with one part of the world was curtailed, it was extended with another;—British Commerce flew, with its penetrating, generous, and diffusive spirit, free and invigorating as the winds of Heaven, from the stormy gulfs of the Baltic to the Pillars of Hercules; thence winging its course to the shores of the Archipelago, awakened sentiments of ancient Freedom and Refinement; and crossing the Ocean, dispensed its treasures, with the bold spirit of British Liberty, from Terra Firma to the mouth of the Orinoko, and to the Nations that sat in darkness on the banks of the La Plata.

Whilst, therefore, the Trade of Great Britain is admitted to have increased surprisingly during the War, we are justified in expecting that, as we possess the *same equivalents* as we heretofore gave in Exchange with those countries that

were not shut out from communication with us, we shall retain a great portion of our Trade with them; and that it will gradually increase with the European Nations, with whom our intercourse was interrupted.* Our Commerce with the East Indies has already felt the good effects of the portion of free trade which has been opened; —and as it becomes better understood and more cultivated, there is reason to hope, that the force of individual talent, capital, and exertion,

* This remark must be qualified by the observation, that if the several Nations of Europe continue to act with the spirit of jealousy and exclusion which has hitherto characterized their mercantile system, their intercourse with each other cannot be so extensive and advantageous as it ought to be. Where this system of exclusion began is not a matter worth inquiring about; but it seems to be still in favour with every Government on the Continent; — France prohibits English Manufactures, because England does not take her Wines and Brandy, except at enormous duties; England lays an almost prohibitory duty on the Timber of the Baltic, and those nations cannot buy our Salt and Manufactures as they used to do; she refuses to admit any longer the Butter and Cheese of the Dutch, and that discerning people retaliate upon us in their new Tariff. The only Countries, in all Europe, to whom we show special favour, are Spain and Portugal, who have not manifested a corresponding preference to us in return; and these Countries are at this moment carrying on so large a trade in Slaves to their Colonies in South America and the West Indies, that they are enabled to extend the growth of Sugar, Coffee, &c. beyond their own wants, to the great detriment of our Planters, who have hitherto supplied a considerable portion of the consumption of Europe. The calls of *Humanity* were not listened to at the return of Peace, when the revival of this traffic might have been easily prevented; and we shall now find it difficult to put a stop to it, though *our Interests* may induce us to exert ourselves for that purpose. In the course of the last year, above 40,000 slaves have been imported into the Brazils, and nearly 20,000 into the Island of Cuba!

will establish a most extensive and lucrative Commerce, upon the ruins of a chartered but unprofitable Monopoly.* In South America our Trade continues to increase; and in the United States, although the markets have been latterly so much over-stocked with the manufactures of England, that they have been actually selling by auction twenty or thirty per cent lower in New

* Within the last 12 months, upwards of one hundred ships, of large burthen, have sailed to India from Great Britain to carry on a free Trade; the great bulk of the cargoes which have arrived from thence, up to the present time, having rendered profitable sales. It appears at present to be overdone, and great losses will probably arise, as was formerly the case from over-trading to Brazil, America, &c.; but eventually perhaps this will tend to establish the Trade on firmer grounds. We cannot, indeed, look to that rapid introduction of a taste for English manufactures, which took place in the Countries of South America, in consequence of the great glut that was sent by the first adventurers. The peculiar habits and religious prejudices of the natives, sanctioned and fenced round by their respective Casts, will probably retard it almost as much as the mildness of their Climate and their constitutional indolence. But we have already supplied them with English Muslins and other light Cotton goods, which they obtain from us on cheaper terms than they can manufacture themselves, though their weavers do not receive more than about 2d a day wages. The genius of the Hindoos would not be unfavourable to the introduction of machinery into their manufactures; but the very low rates of wages will in all probability prevent this from taking place. When the power of the Steam-engine, and the skill and steady exertion of our artizans, overcome such a disparity of wages as this, what have they to apprehend from their rivals on the Continent of Europe? There is a power arising from the combination of manual labour and steadiness, with mental resolution and spirit, which the British character exhibits, that, with the aids of our superior Capital and Skill, and the unparalleled perfection of our machinery, can never be exceeded, perhaps not equalled, in any country of the World.

York and Philadelphia, than they can be bought in Manchester and Leeds; yet the check to this trade is only temporary, and we ourselves consume so large a proportion of the produce of their soil, as Cotton, Tobacco, &c. that nothing can prevent our retaining a most advantageous and increasing Commerce with that active, enlightened, and flourishing nation.

Let us not, then, despair of the Trade and Commerce of Great Britain;—she not only retains more Capital, talents and exertion, than any other Country, but she possesses all natural and acquired advantages upon which a sound and legitimate Trade is founded. Though she cannot preserve that monopoly which she so eminently enjoyed in some quarters during the War, she is still the grand centre of all mercantile operations. Her *Ships, Colonies, and Commerce* will remain and flourish; and as long as her Liberties and her excellent Laws are preserved, “*this nation of shopkeepers*” will continue the mainspring of the Commerce of the World.*

Much as we must lament the bad Harvest, and the prospect of very high prices for Corn, we may anticipate some consequences arising directly

* For a more extensive view of this interesting subject, see the argument in the postscript.

from these misfortunes, highly beneficial both to our Commerce and Manufactures. The latter will be revived by the encouragement which the cultivators of the land will have to become customers again, for all those articles which are rather to be considered as necessaries of life than luxuries, but with the use of which the Husbandman has been gradually dispensing for a long time past; and the internal circulation of all raw and manufactured articles will be much enlivened and extended; they will likewise be animated with fresh spirit, by the revival of our foreign Commerce in Grain.

Our Shipping, likewise, many of which are laid up in the Docks, because no employment can be found which will pay the expense and wear and tear of the voyage, will be extensively engaged in bringing this bulky article;—already they are at sea, and some of them returned to Port with cargoes of Corn, in anticipation of its being admitted to entry in November.

It is very common to hear it stated, not merely in the newspapers of the day, but by enlightened men in the Houses of Parliament, that when we import Corn from the Baltic, or Flour from America, to the extent of four or five millions sterling, we are losers just to that amount; and great lamentations have been made

at all times, that we should be *giving away to our Rivals or our Enemies*, so large a portion of our national Income. But a little examination and reflection would serve to show the fallacy of this opinion;—*whatever amount England pays for foreign Corn*, she is fully indemnified by the *enhanced price and increased quantity of her manufactures or raw produce, sent to foreign Countries in Exchange*; or by the *diminished price at which she provides herself with other articles of Commerce from foreign Countries*. We will illustrate this by examining the profits that will attend an Import of Corn, in the actual situation of this Country. At present the United States of America are indebted to Great Britain a very large sum of money for manufactures disposed of,—we will say four or five millions: and they have an equal quantity unsold, which have been sent thither for sale by our great Capitalists, both in the Sea-ports and manufacturing Towns. We have received in return all the surplus or exportable produce of America, consisting of Cotton, Tobacco, &c. which they could procure even at very high prices; the entire crops of these are sent to England, and still there is a large balance due. —All at once, England is in want of Corn and Flour, and the effect will be, not only that the balance will be paid as quickly as these can be collected and shipped; but the American farmer,

having found an unexpected sale for his produce at high prices, will become a good customer for the stocks of English Woollens, Hardware, &c. which were almost unsaleable: and the English Merchant who is anxious to get his returns from America, will do it either in Corn, or in other raw produce, as Tobacco and Cotton; which latter must necessarily be less in request, and fall in value, in proportion to the quantity of Corn that may be shipped to this Country.— The glut of British manufactures had raised the prices of all the raw produce, which we purchased by them abroad, to an unnatural height; and our Imports of Corn will tend gradually to correct that evil, and enable the English Creditor to obtain from the American Debtor what he owes, in a much more rapid and advantageous manner than he had any prospect of.

The same thing will take place in other parts of the world where Corn can be spared, especially in the Baltic, where the seasons have been more propitious; and in whatever part of Europe we can find a surplus of Wheat, Oats, Barley, &c. we shall not only receive the balances now due, but if our wants are so urgent as to require it, we shall no doubt be able to find sufficient to meet any probable scarcity; and the more we purchase of these necessaries, the more shall we dispose of our superfluous stock of valuable wrought

articles, the produce of our mines and manufactures. As the case stands at this moment, and as it has been for the most part since the final cessation of our foreign military expenditure, we are unable to obtain advantageous returns for the debts owing to us in all the countries of Europe, and in America.—The consequence has been, that immense quantities of specie have been sent to pay the balances, and our ingenious manufacturers have found themselves in the situation of the KING OF PHRYGIA, who was in *danger of starving*, because every thing which he touched was *converted into Gold*. This has been literally the case with us; the influx of the precious metals, in consequence of an alleged *Balance of Trade in our favour*, has impeded our industry and checked our trade, whilst our newspaper writers and others have been congratulating the Country upon the great *accession* to our National Wealth which we derived from it. Let us no longer then continue to offer up the Prayer of Midas, that all we touch may be converted into Gold. In the situation of this Country, we shall be in danger of enduring his punishment, in proportion as we succeed in obtaining his childish privilege.

It may be urged, that it will be impossible to procure from other Countries a supply of Corn adequate to meet the deficiency of our Crops;

and that, in the mean time, many of our Poor will starve, for want of a sufficient supply of proper nourishment. — May Heaven avert so dreadful a calamity! There appears, however, ground to hope, that by the assistance of what yet remains of our old Corn, and the suspension of the Distillation from Grain throughout the United Kingdom, (which measure Government will of course adopt if it should appear, on the opening of the Ports, that there is not a prospect of an adequate supply by Importation,) we shall not only have a sufficiency to prevent any danger of a famine, but to keep prices lower than they are at present. We may likewise rest assured, that wherever an abundance of Corn is to be found, the state of our Trade in every quarter of the Globe is such, and the Balances owing to us so large, as to ensure its transportation to England as quickly as possible. And if, after all, prices continue as high as they are at this moment, it is possible that the real distresses of the Poor may not be so great as they have been of late, in as much as they will be more generally employed, both in the fields and at the looms, and also at better wages than they have received for some time past.

That there will be much distress and complaint we must expect. In the history of this Country, we read of great sufferings and alarming irregu-

larities amongst the lower orders, after the conclusion of every War in which we have been engaged;* and we may now expect our share of these evils, proportioned to the increase of our Taxation, and the vast extent of our late Naval and Military Establishment. The multitudes of men, ignorant of every trade but that of War, who have been wandering about the Country since the Peace, is so great, that one cannot wonder at the depredations and robberies which are committed. Our highways and large towns are infested with idle and ill-disposed persons, who are just able to support themselves by begging and stealing; and who, being for the most part without families and homes, prefer vagrancy to the pain of getting their bread by the sweat of their brow. It appears accordingly, that great numbers of them will not hire themselves to regular labour if it is offered them, though they be able-bodied men; preferring to go on pilfering through the Country, and imposing upon the charity of the benevolent. But with respect to the well disposed labourer and artizan, whether in town or country, who is willing to work for his livelihood, there is some reason to expect that his situation will be bettered, in consequence of the activity that will by degrees be infused into our Agriculture and internal Trade in particular,

* See the History of England, A. D. 1748, 1763, and 1783.

and in a very great degree likewise into our foreign Commerce. His wages too will be fixed at rates more fair and advantageous to himself, as well as his employer; for his own comfort and respectability, and the welfare of his family, will be promoted by his receiving, regularly, lower wages than he had during the War. He cannot indulge, as he was then tempted to do, in drink and extravagance, in food and clothing, (which we have endeavoured before to show was carried, amongst both the manufacturers and the peasantry, to an extent unknown in other times and other countries;) but he will be enabled to maintain himself in comfort, and will become, in all probability, a happier and better member of society than he ever was in the days of his prosperity.

We may, moreover, find that Corn has been driven to a higher price, by the speculations of the Dealers, and the general apprehension of a dearth, than will be maintained; 15s a bushel is now as much as 20s or 22s when our currency was so much more extensive; and this excessive price must necessarily occasion a sensible diminution of the quantity of Wheat consumed, and a recourse to those substitutes of inferior grain, of which so large a proportion may be appropriated to the use of man, in a case of urgent necessity, by putting a stop to Corn Distillation.—

It is not to be expected, indeed, that any Legislative regulations can reduce the price of Corn below its present average value;* but there is reason to hope, that whilst ministers try in vain to lower the price, the Poor, being employed, will be better able to purchase it than they were during the two last years, when it was so cheap that Government were doing all in their power to raise the price.

In proportion as our internal Trade and foreign Commerce shall revive, the state of our finances will improve, and the reduction of the

* In the last Gazette, 93s 6d per quarter was the average return for Wheat. In consequence of the bad harvest of 1800, all descriptions of Corn were selling at higher prices, in January 1801, than they are at this moment. In the month of May they fell one-fourth, owing to the large supplies from Europe and America, and the good appearance of the growing crops; and in the month of August they had fallen so much, that the same Wheat which sold in Liverpool, at the beginning of the year, for 21s, was selling only at 10s per 70lbs. In the most favourable view of things we could not expect such a change as this; but if we consider how much more the growth of all kinds of Grain is extended in proportion to the increased population, and that the consumption has been lessening for some time, owing not only to the high prices, but the great distress of the lower orders, we may find, if we have a favourable Spring for getting Corn and Potatoes into the ground, that the prices of Grain have been at the highest, especially if the Imports from the Baltic and America are large. Though the weather was remarkably unfavourable last Autumn for sowing Wheat, this evil may be in some measure remedied by the labours of the Spring. The culture of Potatoes affords such efficient means of providing human sustenance, in periods of scarcity like the present, that it would be worth the attention of Parliament, to consider of the expediency of encouraging the extensive growth of the early Potatoes by a bounty.

Interest of the National Debt, which has been agitated in the newspapers and in private society, as a measure indispensable to our salvation, will no longer be an interesting topic of discussion. As, however, it is canvassed freely, and with some warmth, between the Fundholders and those who have no interest in the Funds, let us briefly examine how the case stands, when tried in the scale of justice, and what would be the effect of any violent alteration in it upon the state of the Country.

When the interest of the National Debt was only one million and a half, (a hundred and twenty years ago,) it was represented as intolerable, and stocks were at thirty and forty per cent discount. Since that time the Debt has gone on accumulating, and every writer, from Davenant to Hume and Price, has prognosticated the ruin that it was on the point of bringing down, not merely upon our Trade and Manufactures, but upon our Agriculture, our Population, and our very existence as an independent Nation. Neither our Trade nor our Independence appear yet to have suffered from it. But the period of annihilation, so long foretold, (the end of the 20 years allowed by Mr. Paine,) is at length arrived; it is announced by Mr. Cobbett, and whilst he pronounces the funeral oration over the Funding

System,* he informs us that it has been feeding upon the vitals of the constitution, in perpetual alliance with corruption and injustice.—He has the art of putting his propositions in a striking light; and on this subject, after informing us that the interest *neither can nor ought to be paid*, he says, “ Whilst A, who put his fortune into the “ Funds, is receiving five per cent interest on it, “ B, who employed his money in Agriculture, “ finds the value of his land and produce depre- “ ciated one-half or more: he is therefore greatly “ injured; and has a right to call on the Legis- “ lature to rectify an injustice which has arisen “ entirely from the *bubble of paper money*. They “ both started in 1812 with £1000; and A lent his “ money to Perceval and the rest of them, who “ were to pay him five per cent interest; and B “ went to farming, to make a profit by the applica- “ tion of his capital and labour. A had to receive “ of B, in taxes, the amount of about seventy “ bushels of Wheat; for seventy bushels of Wheat “ cost then about £50. This was fair as long “ as the bubble continued. But the bubble gets “ a crack; and things are so changed, that A

* See *Cobbett's Register 7th September*. “ For my part I “ expect the whole machine to go to pieces. Not in an hour, “ nor in a year; but even now the battlements rock most “ furiously. All is upon the shake; I am quite sure that “ *those who flee first* will experience the least degree of “ danger.” One may presume Mr. Cobbett has not any interest in the Funds;—the Writer of these remarks never had.

“ demands and receives of B more than one
 “ hundred bushels of Wheat, instead of the
 “ seventy which it was clearly understood A
 “ was to receive.”——He goes on to show how
 a Reformed Parliament would set this matter to
 rights: “ They would inquire who the Fund-
 “ holders were when they deposited their money;
 “ they would compare prices at the different
 “ times; they would hunt out the receivers of
 “ public money; they would see the extent of
 “ the Nation’s means; and in a very short time,
 “ with the greatest correctness, allot to every one
 “ his real due.”

Thus easily does Mr. Cobbett dispose of the
 claims of the Fundholders; but he seems to
 have forgotten, that but a small portion of the
 original subscribers or lenders have now got
 those sums in the stocks which they originally
 invested; the property has changed hands
 twenty times;—and a Reformed Parliament might
 as well inquire who was the proprietor of Botley
 at the time of William the Conqueror, with a
 view of dispossessing its present owner, and
 reinstating the descendants of the original pro-
 prietor, as make the investigation which he
 proposes.

Let us seriously examine what justice there
 would be in taking from one set of men a part of

their incomes arising from the Funds, because those from whom they bought them were loan Contractors, or in some other way benefited from a connexion with the Government. That there are many Fundholders, to an immense amount, who became possessed of this property from such connexion, cannot be doubted; but it would be utterly impossible, and if it were possible, it would be highly improper, to attempt to distinguish one Stockholder from another. The contracts for the loans, from the beginning of the last War, have been made in the most public, fair, and open manner; Mr. Paine in 1793, and Mr. Cobbeti in 1813, might have had a share of them had they pleased; the Country, who approved and supported that War, were a party to those Contracts, and are pledged with the Government to fulfil the conditions of them; and however great may be the difficulty of paying the interest this year, or the next, or for twenty years to come, the Income, the Industry, the Land, and all the property of the Country, are directly pledged for the deficiency, if any arise, and for the payment of the Interest by every means which labour and frugality, in public and in private, can provide.

Besides we must not forget how many thousands of our fellow-subjects, especially amongst those who had the least concern in promoting of

profiting by the War,—aged annuitants, women and children, professional men, and all who depended, not upon productive labour, but fixed incomes—suffered as long as the Loans continued, from the enhanced prices which they paid for every thing, whilst their income as Fundholders was stationary, and in its nature incapable of improvement. They also paid the Property Tax equally with all the other classes of the community, though they could not possibly indemnify themselves, as persons in Trade and Agriculture were able to do, by raising the prices of their productions. And during the alarms of former wars, when the three per cent Consols were as low sometimes as 47, the Fundholders run great risks, and frequently at later periods, when the same description of stock was at 55 and 56.

And shall we now, when things assume a gloomy appearance, and our finances are drooping, lay our hands upon the bond which has been given under the sanction of national honour and good faith; and say to the public Creditor, you must relinquish three millions out of your thirty, to meet the urgency of our necessities?—When ambitious and unbounded schemes of power, wealth, and aggrandizement, recoil upon ourselves, shall we turn to the class of men whom we have described above as having the least participated in the benefits of our late system,

and tell them they are to be the first to make a sacrifice, and that they must have their income for ever decimated, as it was during the War? Shall we do this, whilst we see two or three millions of the produce of our labour and capital employed in supporting *Sinecures*, unmerited *Pensions*, and a wasteful *Civil List*? nine or ten millions in encouraging idleness, profligacy, and improvidence amongst the *Poor*?—and five or six millions more than is necessary in maintaining an immense standing army? If we have not a sufficient regard to public morals and the freedom of the Country, to lead us to correct these abuses, let us do something towards it, in order that we may save ourselves from the disgrace of such a compromise of national good faith.—Whatever the world may think of our past wisdom and moderation, in combining one coalition after another against our *Republican* neighbours, they have never suspected our uprightness and virtue; and it would be the height of folly, when we have so successfully attained the object we have been fighting for, to forfeit that high character for national honour and integrity, which to this moment has not been questioned;—to violate our engagements, and offend against the eternal laws of Justice.

Let us then be well assured, that all possible means have been exhausted for meeting the

exigencies of the Country, before we admit the idea of taking any advantage of the Public Creditor; let us be convinced that we are reduced to a state of absolute and irretrievable insolvency, before we think of partial payments. What would be thought of an individual, who should propose to his creditors to compromise with them for his debts at the rate of fifteen shillings in the pound, in order that he might go on keeping his retinue of servants, his equipage, and his expensive establishment, and continue his system of indolence and extravagance!— *How shocking would it be, to witness the same kind of attempt made by a great Nation!*

It is to be hoped, that the Government will be more consistent than the people are on this subject. However they might be inclined, indeed, to diminish their present difficulties by tampering with the Funds, they would be deterred from it by the apprehension of injuring Public Credit so as to prevent them from ever borrowing in future, for the purposes of new Wars; but it is highly probable they will appropriate the Sinking Fund without much reserve to the exigencies of the times; this is a resource from which they have so frequently drawn, that they have acquired a kind of prescriptive right to avail themselves of it on an emergency, and the Fundholder does not consider himself as injured by it. Though this

practice has been occasionally resorted to ever since the year 1735 or 1740, it is not strictly justifiable, and it must materially affect the value of the Funds, if continued when no new loans are called for. At the present moment it is important to retain the Sinking Fund in full operation, if possible, because it would purchase so great a portion of the capital of the three per cent consols, whilst they are at 63: and it is probable Government might at this time (if such an intention were announced) borrow as much money as they would otherwise take from the Sinking Fund, at a less rate of interest than 5 per cent, which would be a great saving to the Public.*

The only way in which the Country can fairly get rid of any portion of the unredeemed Debt,

* Since the publication of Dr. Hamilton's book on the National Debt, the Public are beginning to understand the real nature of the Sinking Fund, and its deceitful operation whilst the War continued, and new Loans were contracted;— and we are astonished the Legislature could sanction such a solemn declaration as the following, or that the People should put confidence in it: “That the total capital of the Funded Debt of Great Britain, amounting on the 5th January 1786, to £238,231,248 5s 2½d, had on or before the 1st March 1813, been wholly satisfied and discharged, the Commissioners for the reduction of the National Debt having actually purchased £238,350,143 18s 1d, exceeding the aforementioned sum by £118,895 12s 10½d.”!! — The ministers have it in their power, however, to make the Sinking Fund available to a good purpose; and if they study the security of their own seats, they will not only abstain from misapplying it, but do all in their power to avail themselves of the plentiful supply of money in the market, to add to and improve it.

is by borrowing as soon as they are able at a lower rate of interest, in order to pay it off;—say at four or four and half per cent per annum; and though they were unable to do this during the War, because great Capitalists found the means of employing their money in land and other objects, which paid them five per cent and upwards, yet is it by no means improbable that they may be able to accomplish it now, that Peace is established and no more Loans required. Indeed, money is already so plentiful, that many persons are sending it to be invested in the American and the French Funds; and if something does not arise to prevent it, these will become by degrees very favourite channels for the disposal of our surplus Capital. They now pay seven per cent interest and upwards; but there is a prospect of their rising so quickly, owing to the limited extent of the public debts of those Countries, and the growing confidence in their Resources,* that they will cease to be the same advantageous places of deposit for English Capitalists that they now are; and when the time shall arrive that they only yield five per cent or thereabouts, it will then be possible for the English Government to borrow at the rate of four or four and a half per cent.

* By the last accounts from the United States of America, the Stock of that Government had advanced 4 per cent since the 1st of October.

The Stocks being the grand reservoir for receiving from time to time all unemployed Capital, and the accumulation of private wealth which the owner is unable or indisposed to put into circulation, it is obvious that in proportion as Agriculture, Commerce, and Manufactures become less profitable, there will be more money afloat, and it will be invested in the Funds, unless the Credit of this security is shaken: the Funds will rise in consequence, and he who buys into the three per cents at 70, will receive only about four and a quarter per cent per annum interest for his investment. In such a state of things, Government may easily borrow at four and a half per cent; and if they were obliged formerly to pay a higher interest than five per cent, (as they did between 1793 and 1802 in particular, owing to the unprecedented extent of their Loans, and the want of public confidence in Government securities,) they surely ought to borrow as soon as they can below five per cent, and endeavour to make a bargain with the Fundholders, on more advantageous terms to the Country. By this process alone can the Nation fairly counteract the advantage which the Fundholders now enjoy in the superior return which their capital yields above that of the other branches of the community.

But if Trade and Commerce flourish, and Agriculture pays a liberal return for capital, the

Taxes will be paid, the difficulty respecting the annual discharge of the interest due to the public Creditor will diminish, and by degrees all that little narrow jealousy which now exists, respecting the advantageous situation in which the Fundholder stands, will disappear.*—At present

* After the termination of the War which ended in the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, the Minister of the day, Mr. Pelham, proposed and carried into effect a scheme for reducing the Interest on the National Debt, (amounting then to seventy-eight millions,) which is worth perusing at this time; the Debates on the occasion in the House of Commons were not long, and may be seen, as reported by Dr. Johnson, in the Gentleman's Magazine for 1749:—and a general account of the whole is given in Smollet's continuation of Hume. The resolutions of the Commons on this head, were printed by authority in the London Gazette, signifying, that those who were or should be proprietors of any part of the public debt, redeemable by law, incurred before Michaelmas, in the year 1749, carrying an interest of four per centum per annum, who should, on or before the twenty-eighth day of February in that year, subscribe their names, signifying their consent to accept of an interest of *three pounds* per centum, to commence from the twenty-fifth day of December, in the year 1757, subject to the same provisions, notices, and clauses of redemption, to which their respective sums at four per centum were then liable, should, in lieu of their present interest be entitled to four per centum till the twenty-fifth day of December, in the year 1750; and after that day, to three pounds ten shillings per centum per annum, till the twenty-fifth day of December, 1757; and no part of that debt, except what was due to the East India company, should be redeemable to this period: that if any part of the national debt, incurred before last Michaelmas, redeemable by law, and carrying an interest of four per centum, should remain unsubscribed on or before the thirtieth day of May, the government should pay off the principal. For this purpose his majesty was enabled to borrow of any person or persons, bodies politic or corporate, any sum or sums of money not exceeding that part of the national debt which might remain unsubscribed, to be charged on the sinking fund, upon any terms not exceeding the rate of interest in the foregoing proposal.

the difficulty of proceeding is great; the Fundholder must continue to enjoy his superiority, and the Landowners, the mercantile, and all the other classes must submit patiently to their temporary humiliation. But there is reason to hope that when time has been afforded for all the different interests to find their level, and accommodate themselves to the Peace-system, we shall find that the increased wealth and resources of the Kingdom, which have accompanied our warlike career, will enable us to pay the interest on the National Debt with as little difficulty as at the commencement of this War, or at the end of the American War in 1783. At the latter period, Government were so much alarmed by

All the duties appropriated to the payment of the interest were still continued, and the surplus of these incorporated with the sinking fund for the discharge of the principal. Books were opened for the subscription at the exchequer, the bank of England, and the South-sea House; and copies of these resolutions transmitted to the directors of all the monied corporations.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer stated his opinion that the three per cents would soon be above 70; yet all his efforts have been unable to raise them above 63; this is not merely owing to the deficiency in the Revenue, and the general distress of the Country, but to the want of confidence in the talents and virtuous efforts of Government to extricate us from our difficulties. Though the three per cents now pay five per cent per annum, the great Capitalists are investing in other securities which only pay four and a half per cent, or even below that. When Parliament assemble, we shall see whether the *vigour* of Ministers will upset the *dictum* of Mr. Cobbett respecting the security of the Stocks.

the extent of the debt, amounting to 238 millions, that the Commissioners appointed to examine the state of the public accounts, reported the amount of the debt to be so enormous as to require the united efforts of the ablest heads and purest hearts, to effect its reduction. The extract from their 11th Report, given below, shows how pathetically they appealed to the Patriotism of the Nation:

Extract.—"The Nation calls for the aid of
 " all its members to co-operate with Government,
 " and to combine in carrying into execution such
 " measures as shall be adopted for the attain-
 " ment of so indispensable an end. This aid
 " the subject is bound to give to the state, by
 " every other obligation, as well as by the duty
 " he owes his country; and with such general
 " aid, the difficulties, great as they appear, will
 " we trust be found not insurmountable.

" A plan must be formed for the reduction of
 " this debt, and that without delay, now in the
 " favourable moment of Peace; the evil does
 " not admit of procrastination, palliatives, or ex-
 " pedients; it presses on, and must be met with
 " force and firmness. *The right of the Public*
 " *Creditor must be preserved inviolate*; his secu-
 " rity rests on the solid foundation, never to be
 " shaken, of Parliamentary national faith. What

“ can be done, the support of Public Credit,
 “ the preservation of national honour, and
 “ justice to the public Creditor, demand should
 “ be done. It must be done, or serious conse-
 “ quences will ensue. The subjects of this
 “ Kingdom are opulent and public spirited; let
 “ the distresses of the country be fairly laid
 “ before them, and they will contribute cheerfully
 “ and liberally to her relief.”

When Parliament meet, we may witness a similar appeal from the present ministers of the Crown. But in the mean time it is evident, the public confidence in either the ability of the Country to fulfil its engagements, or in the wisdom and virtue of ministers, is shaken; and it will be utterly destroyed, if the same system is pursued that was acted upon the last session of Parliament, of continuing undiminished the public expenditure, maintaining by unjust contrivances an unabated income to ministers and their adherents, and permitting the landed interest to adopt fresh manœuvres for supporting a forced encouragement to Agriculture at the expense of every other interest.* Of this character also are the

* Since the publication of the first edition of this Letter, Mr. M'Culloch has produced a very ingenious "*Essay on the reduction of the Interest on the Public Debt,*" in which he endeavours to establish the justice and expediency of that measure on the ground of the Depreciation of money that existed whilst Government were borrowing, since the period

other expedients which have been broached by the advocates of the landed interest, for shifting the burthen from themselves; such as obtaining from the Bank, loans on their land, and getting an act to reduce the rate of legal interest.—The Bank may accommodate them in the former method, but ministers will never persuade Parliament to adopt the latter. If the lower House sanction it, the peers will certainly stop so flagrant an act of injustice from passing into Law. When the interest of money is not worth 5 per cent, it will be borrowed for less, and therefore, prospect-

of the Bank Restriction in 1797—and of its now rising to its former value. The writer appears to forget, that if the Creditors of the Nation find themselves entitled to a greater return, owing to the fall in the value of commodities (or what is the same thing, the rise in the value of money) than they were during the War, it is a discovery which might have been made twenty years ago as well as now; and they may retort the argument, by desiring the advocates of reduction to look at the period in question, and see what profits were made by the Landowners and others who kept their capitals out of the Funds. The Fundholders were mostly public bodies, Trustees, Executors, aged Annuitants, Women, Minors, or others who were unable to employ capitals in any other way. They ran their risk, and were contented with remaining in the back ground, whilst others pushed their fortunes. Much money no doubt was made by the Stock-jobbers and Contractors; but it would be impossible to make them refund by Mr. M'Culloch's plan, because they have ceased to be Fundholders perhaps altogether, many are dead, some become Landowners, some pensioned Peers; and those who now hold the Stocks are as fully entitled to their dividends as if the Bank Restriction had never existed. It is remarkable that Mr. M'Culloch should not discern this; but indeed all his reasoning must be founded on the assumption that we are unable to pay the Interest; if this were to be really the case, the question would stand in a different light.

ively such interference is unnecessary; but if it is meant to have a retrospective operation, it will be a fit attendant upon the plan for reducing the interest upon the Funds, and they will both be rejected by the Legislature as innovations upon the immutable principles of Justice.*

* The repeal of the *Usury Act* will be more likely to serve the purpose of the borrowers of money, by saving the expenses now attendant upon the system of evasion by means of redeemable annuities, amounting in general to two and a half or three per cent.—The prejudices upon this subject, seem to be at length subdued by the Commerce and enlightened principles of this country. We are much indebted, however, to Mr. Bentham, for placing it so fully and fairly before the public. From time immemorial the lenders of money have been assaulted by preachers and councils, as well as by civil laws; and the animosity has not yet abated. Splendid distress is still found to resort to ruinous expedients, and humiliated Pride will vent itself in virulent abuse. But it may be hoped the spirit of the age will put the thing on its proper footing, and that money will be left to find its own value in the market, like any other commodity.

In connexion with the subject of the Funds, it may be proper for Parliament to consider of the propriety of imposing a Tax on those Englishmen, who have removed to other countries, but derive their incomes from this, generally arising from the Funds. If 100,000 persons live abroad, and spend only £100 per annum each, a tax of ten per cent would raise £1,000,000; and whether this £100 is remitted from the Funds, or from real estate, it seems right that it should pay something to the Country which protects it. They who sell all their property, and expatriate themselves, cannot be made to pay; but all those certainly ought to contribute, who remove their persons, and leave their property under the protection of the English Laws.

Notwithstanding the trying circumstances in which this Country stands, with respect to her Trade and Resources, it appears that we are not in a situation to justify extreme despondence, but rather that we are warranted in expecting a gradual improvement. By the continued exercise of that patience, perseverance, and steady loyalty, which distinguish the English character, we have surmounted a succession of difficulties during the War; and we ought not to doubt, that those with which we are now wrestling may in like manner be subdued. If, indeed, any part of the body politic fails in the performance of the duty which is assigned to it, confusion and disgrace will inevitably follow. If indifference to the measures of Government, and the complaints of the People, infect the higher classes, on the one hand; or ignorant phrensy, despair, and intemperate zeal for Reform, possess the minds of the lower classes of the People, on the other;—all that we value as a nation, all that we most wish to preserve as members of a great community, may be scattered to the winds in an instant;—Confidence and Commerce may vanish irretrievably, in the chaos of anarchy and mischief;—Property and personal security be at the command of popular fury, and our Liberties and Constitution suspended, or utterly destroyed.—But we cannot pursue the supposition; we will indulge the hope, that as soon as Parliament meet, the just remonstrances

of the Nation, urged with firmness and moderation, will produce a gradual Retrenchment and Reform throughout every branch of Government; and that, in the mean time, all classes of the community will exert every nerve of resolution, to bear bravely the unavoidable pressure of the times, and those difficulties with which we have to conflict in common with the other Nations of Europe.

Throughout the Continent we hear complaints of the ruin of their manufacturing interests, and of the languishing state of Trade and Commerce;* and in the United States of America, there has been, and there still continues, a degree of distress, and want of confidence, such as was never before experienced.—It is true that no Country has suffered, since the termination of the War, what England now endures; but in what Country of the world is there the same portion of virtuous enthusiasm, vigorous intelligence, and bold resolution of mind, that pervade and elevate all classes?—where shall we find an equal diffusion of intellectual, moral, and religious attainments? Our widely extended Commerce and influence abroad, our naval greatness and our military renown, have rendered us illustrious and respected by all the world; and whilst these can never be put into the shade, it will be found

* See Appendix D.

that other qualities and endowments, calculated for the season of difficulty and of distress, will shine forth conspicuously; that the cardinal virtues of fortitude, temperance, and justice, chastened and refined by piety and Christian resignation, will carry us beyond the dangers that menace us, and give us a more exalted and grateful sense of the advantages and privileges we enjoy as Britons, than could ever arise from a boundless increase of our Trade, or a still greater accumulation of glory in Arms.

Mr. Say informs us, in his late publication upon *the English People*, that (with the exception of a few favourites of fortune) they are compelled by the weight of taxation to *perpetual labour*;—that every one is running, absorbed in his own affairs; that nobody has leisure to read, and if they had, they could not buy books on account of their dearness. “The rich have “other pleasures,” he says, “than those of the “mind; the middling class will soon be unable “to study in England; and the philosophic “observer fears, that this country of Bacon, of “Newton, and of Locke, will soon make rapid “and retrograde steps towards barbarism.”—Such is the ignorance of the English character, manifested by one of the most eminent of the literati of France. It is only exceeded, by the perversity and coldness with which that nation

generally speak of the sacrifice which we made to Humanity and the Rights of Man, in the abolition of the Slave-trade.— They believe, or at least they profess to think, that we were solely influenced by views of Colonial policy in the adoption of that measure, and that our design was to raise the prices of Sugar, by putting a stop to its increased production.

We will not challenge a comparison with our neighbours, as to National Character and Happiness. — We admire the variety and extent of their intellectual and scientific attainments, and admit the force of their genius, and the brilliancy and taste which animate their social intercourses; but whilst we seek in vain in the wreck of their Independence, for the image of public virtue, and for that general feeling of patriotism which is essential to the well-being of a state, we ought not to criticise too severely the frame and administration of their Government, nor the boasted nature of their Institutions, nor their moral and religious habits and views. It is to be feared, they have not yet learned the value and true nature of Liberty. Wisdom and a love of freedom blazed forth for a day; but they have passed from impetuosity and phrensy, to the extremity of weakness; and whilst we review the succession of their Revolutions, we discover that in the intemperate prosecution of the

popular cause, their successes and their misfortunes have alike contributed to confirm their slavery. Let the veil of compassion be thrown over their errors and sufferings; and let us hope that they will learn, from past failures, to pursue the best of causes by moderation, well regulated exertion, and patient perseverance.

With respect to ourselves, we will admit that constant labour and frugality are the general law of life amongst the lower orders; and we rejoice that it is so. We are sensible that our gentry and aristocracy are much habituated to active exertion, and are not unacquainted with the severe trials and difficulties which have interrupted the course of our prosperity. To these very circumstances may be attributed many of the national blessings we enjoy, and of those advantages which are in a great measure peculiar to Great Britain. It is true, there is in the English character an austerity and arrogance which are justly condemned,

“*Les saints Anglais ont dans le caractere*

“*Je ne sais quoi de dur et d' Insulaire;*”

but in spite of all their faults, they possess a determined attachment to principle, a love of virtue, and a generous enthusiasm in favour of equal rights, which existing, not for a season, but constantly and steadily, serve them in good

fortune, and sustain them with the same superiority in adverse circumstances.—We may congratulate ourselves, that knowledge and virtue are diffused more widely, amongst the middling and inferior classes of society, than in almost any other Country;—we may rejoice, that all persons in England know and feel the excellence of our Laws, and the value of our Constitution so sensibly, as to be on the whole very vigilant against the encroachments of the executive power and influence;—and above all, we may be thankful that in an age when free inquiry, and the spirit of philosophic research, have taken the most daring flights, the attachment to Religion remains unshaken, and genuine piety is esteemed, not merely as a duty, but as an honour and an ornament.

It is true, that vice and immorality abound in this Country and in this generation, throughout all ranks and conditions of society; and we are far from exemplifying the favourite doctrine of the indefinite perfectibility of man; but it must be acknowledged by the most rigid moralist, that this Nation and the present age are not on the whole more vicious than those which are delineated in the pages of history; and we might show that we have made some signal attainments in the science and practice of morals, which our forefathers never conceived.—Without entering into

an enumeration of all the proofs that might be adduced in confirmation of this, we may rest satisfied with mentioning the general decorum that prevails in our manners; the successful discouragement of gross immoralities, in language and conduct, in the middle and higher classes, as well as drunkenness and all low vices amongst the inferior ranks; the diminution of flagrant crimes, and the consequent diminution of capital punishments, which has been in a great measure owing to the more general diffusion of knowledge amongst the Poor. We may point to those monuments of beneficence and individual charity, which every-where adorn the Island; — those institutions for sheltering the helpless orphan, administering to the destitute, and reclaiming the hopeless profligate, which prove the existence of a degree of philanthropy and genuine sympathy amongst all ranks of society, which no other Country has ever exhibited. The growth of liberal feeling is marked by the gradual remission of persecuting statutes against Dissenters from the Establishment; and we must never forget the memorable triumph of Humanity in the Abolition of the Slave-trade,

To trace the causes which have led to this height of intellectual, moral, and religious improvement, would be an interesting inquiry, but too long for discussion in these pages.—

It has generally been ascribed, for the most part, to the well-balanced frame of our constitution, the civil and religious privileges, and the various and increasing political advantages which we have enjoyed;—all of these, however, may have grown out of our national and peculiar character, as much as they have contributed to form it. The trial by Jury, the freedom of the Press, and the fair and honourable administration of Justice, may be in like manner partly the causes and partly the effects;—they have kept pace in their progress towards perfection, with the growth of moral excellence which we have been contemplating. — For all these blessings, we must perhaps admit, that we are principally indebted to natural causes; our cold rough climate, and insular situation, which have given us robust bodies, hardihood and bravery of mind, and security of person and property, have roused all classes to active and laborious habits, and inspired the lower and middling ranks with that indefatigable industry, and strong desire of bettering their condition, which form the best foundation of public and private virtue. The Commerce which has arisen from this state of society, has by degrees extended our power and influence over the whole world; whilst our peculiar habits of social intercourse, and the preservation of perfect tranquillity at home, have created a continual increase of domestic comforts;—and all

united, have contributed to the successful cultivation of the sciences and philosophy, and to the perfection of the various arts of civilized life.

Thus, whilst Nature has denied us those warm suns and fruitful seasons, which supply the Nations in the South of Europe with more than they require, she has given us every thing. By conferring on us originally few conveniences, and inspiring numerous wants, she makes us more rich and independent than any other Country. We should starve, if we were idle; and thence we possess more of what will purchase the good things of life, than our more favoured neighbours in France, Italy, and Spain, where the bounties of Nature are shared without labour, without riches, without frugality. We are free, because we are the slaves of necessity; we are rich, because our Country is poor. We find Laws, Liberty, and Religion, necessary to protect our riches, and at the same time to satisfy and control our restless desires; whilst other Nations, who possess the Vine, the Olive, and the Fig-tree, have no stimulus to exertion, and are consequently the contented slaves of Indolence and Despotism. We are never at ease, and therefore always industrious and happy.—Our passions are calm, and our minds are serene, because our skies are cloudy;—our souls generous and gentle, because our

climate is cold and boisterous;—our hearts and imaginations warm, liberal, and pious, because our mountains are barren, our valleys and plains wet and stubborn, and our harvests irregular and precarious.*

* Of those who think too much is here attributed to Nature, I would inquire how the people of Switzerland have retained so much purity, religion, and steadiness of character, in the midst of the enfeebled States of Germany, France, and Italy? When they taste the pure breeze of their mountains, and contemplate the smiling valleys below, the abodes of Peace and rural industry, their hearts are softened;—when the picturesque scenery is contrasted with the stupendous Glaciers that surround it, now covered with stormy clouds, now glittering with snow, their souls cannot but be purified and exalted. Can the Peasant frequently hear the Tempest approach, without feeling emotions of piety, and the strong impulses of virtuous resolve?—can he see the Lightning flash beneath his feet, without being subdued by humility and devotion?—can he continually hear the murmur of the Thunder, and not be gradually led to think seriously and act innocently?—can he be awakened from his sleep by the winds, when they break loose from the depths of the hills, and the rocks burst into masses which threaten to destroy his flocks and his dwelling, and not attach himself closer to his kindred and friends? And does not England also present similar scenes of beauty and sublimity?—surrounded by the Ocean, fortified by Rocks, intersected by Mountains and Rivers, adorned with Valleys and Lakes, we are awakened at every step to a sense of the Deity, and drawn as it were insensibly from the fashion of the World, to the simplicity and truth of Nature. We feel the tenderest emotions of gratitude and joy, when we witness the verdure of our Spring exceeding that of any other country; we listen with sentiments of religious awe, to the sweeping blast that drives the surges on our shores; and we never contemplate that great element the Sea, without feeling our own littleness, and being compelled to think of Omnipotence and Eternity.

“ We envy not the warmer clime that lies
 “ In ten degrees of more indulgent skies ;

Such appears to be the origin of our peculiar character; thence the vigorous Intellect, the Philosophy, the Freedom, and the Commerce, that distinguish our Island; the sincerity of manners, the comforts and the warm affections of domestic and social life, the exalted influence and condition of the female sex, that adorn our society; the calm devotion to the cause of truth and virtue, the steady love of Country, and attachment to its laws, which animate our citizens; and the sentiments of piety and religious duty which inspire the great body of our community.*

“ On foreign mountains may the sun refine
 “ The Grape’s soft juice, and mellow it to wine,
 “ With Citron groves adorn a distant soil,
 “ And the fat Olive swell with floods of Oil :

To which we may add, in the language of Mrs. Barbauld,

“ MAN is the nobler growth our Realms supply,
 “ And *Souls* are ripened in our northern sky.”

* In this view of the distinguished blessings which we enjoy, we are reluctantly compelled again to except the unfavourable effect which is produced by our manufactures on the character of the people who are employed and live amongst them. They have been the source of unbounded wealth and splendour to the Nation, but every candid friend to his Country must admit, that they have generally very much degraded the lower orders wherever they have extended themselves; and that if they have promoted the population, they have not ensured the happiness and respectability of that increased population. Owing to the necessary fluctuations in wages, and the irregularity in the prices of provisions, we are continually exposed to riots and tumults in the neighbourhood of large manufactories. In Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire, the bigoted and shortsighted rage against machinery has checked the Hosiery trade, and may end in its gradual removal to other parts; in the Iron districts of Monmouth and Glamorganshire, where the population has doubled in a few years, where the poor hamlets

And this, Sir, is the People to whom the charitable advisers of the Meeting at the London Tavern are offering alms, as they did to the poor sufferers of Hamburg and of Dresden!—this people, who possess Commerce, Liberty, Religion, (of which nothing can bereave them,)

have been raised into flourishing towns, and the barren tracts of common-land converted into verdant fields, by the growth of this branch of Industry; ten thousand workmen undertake to regulate the assize of Bread in the season of scarcity, by breaking open the shops of the Flour-dealers, and ruining the Bakers. And in Birmingham, the makers of military accoutrements and warlike weapons are beginning to obviate the evils arising from the too long use of them, by a recourse to violence against their peaceable fellow-citizens. Having dwelt on this subject before, it is not necessary to enlarge here; let it suffice to add, that it behoves those who derive the benefit, to adopt every measure which can be devised of moral and religious discipline, to check the evil of Manufactures; and we may trust that great efforts to accomplish this, will arise out of their present depressed state. As long, indeed, as men, women, and children, congregate in large factories to work, and are attached to the Steam-engine and machinery, (the omnipotent allies of our genius and productive industry,) it must be extremely difficult to retain purity of mind and simplicity of manners.—But instances are not wanting, to prove that where the influence of the master is steadily directed to the mental powers and moral state of the work-people, the Poor in the most extensive Manufactories may become orderly, virtuous, and happy.—The towns of Belper and Millford, about seven miles from Derby, contained, twenty years ago, about one thousand five hundred inhabitants, and they were notorious in the Country for vice and immorality.—Since then, the population has increased to about seven thousand, in consequence of the establishment of the extensive Cotton-works of the Messrs. Struts. The industry and good conduct of this community is now so conspicuous, when compared with the neighbouring villages, (where no Manufactures are established,) that I have annexed, in Appendix E, a particular report of its present state; it presents a spectacle of plenty, comfort, and happiness, not to be exceeded in Europe. May others, who are engaged in extensive Manufactures, be incited to imitate this example!

and settled habits of Industry and Frugality, —are they so subdued by circumstances, so humiliated by the effects of our over-strained ambition, and long protracted Wars, as to submit to this degradation!—Oh! fatal Greatness, false and unhallowed Glory!



This is a subject, Sir, of so interesting a nature, that I feel unwilling to dismiss it, though I am aware of my incompetence to do it justice, and that it is time to bring this long Letter to a close.

In reviewing the stormy period of War which has just gone by, the mind is deeply affected with grief and anxiety.—We congratulate ourselves upon the final accomplishment of the Herculean labour which we undertook;—but we are now convinced that the game of War has not been played without great losses, and infinite hazard. We flatter ourselves that we have conferred a signal blessing upon our neighbours, in restoring to them the line of their legitimate monarchy;—but it is impossible to be blind to the conviction, that we have more than once

placed our own liberties and inestimable privileges in jeopardy; and that at this moment the pressure of our burthens is such, that the most sanguine must feel some degree of despondency, and the most confident be depressed with apprehensions.

We trace the origin of our Crusades against the Infidels and visionary Enthusiasts of France, to the devoted love of our own moderate and well-balanced Constitution, and the dread of Innovation;—but when the tempest has subsided, we discover that the breasts of Englishmen may be agitated by groundless alarms. We feel the warm glow of Patriotism, when we recollect the achievements of our arms by sea and land;—but the time at length arrives, when we suspect that our bosoms have been fired with an excessive and dangerous love of Glory.

The difficulties and dangers which we have from time to time encountered, have served to rouse unexampled industry and talent in every branch of our community;—but we cannot conceal our fears, that the system has been greatly overstrained,—the strongest frame must sink under uninterrupted fatigue. We have carried the cultivation of our soil to such a height of productiveness, that “gladness is taken away, “and joy out of the plentiful field;” and our

Crops have become so superabundant, that bad seasons and a scarcity of provisions, are subjects on which we are at a loss whether to mourn or to rejoice.

We have filled the earth with the manufactured produce of our industry, and we are now over-burthened with it ourselves.—To supply our armies and those of our Allies during the War, and for the purposes of our own internal Commerce, we substituted Paper in the place of Gold;—we now find that we have too much of the one, whilst the return of the other is a proof of the unprofitable nature of our trade; and the influx of specie, and an abundance of the precious metals, are felt to be a misfortune.

In examining the state of our Finances, we admit that the Paper-system, and the power of spending our future income by funding new debts, have given omnipotence to our Arms, and monopoly to our Trade;—but when they are arrived at the zenith of their splendour, we discern that we have paid too dearly for these distinctions, by which property has been subverted at home;—the rich have become poor, and the poor rich. Our boast has been, that no taxes were levied without the consent of the People, expressed by their Representatives in Parliament;—but we perceive at length, that the chief employment of

Parliament is to assist in imposing Taxes upon the People.—It has been proved incontestably, that the effect of this system of Taxation has been to excite the activity and energy of all classes, and through our long wars, to increase the comforts of the Poor, and extend our population more rapidly than in any other Nation of the old World;—but in consequence of that very increase in population, in activity, and in productiveness, the Poor, rendered unable to maintain themselves on the return of Peace, threaten to disturb our domestic tranquillity;—and we are compelled to acknowledge, that whilst we have been building up the tottering fabric of a corrupt and despotic throne, our own limited monarchy has broken through the Barriers of the Constitution, and the influence of the Crown been growing vastly at the expense of the People. — “ *La Liberté a produit l'excès des tributs; mais l'effet de ces tributs excessifs est de produire, a leur tour, la servitude.*”

In contemplating the state of Morals, we rejoice that Justice, Fortitude, and Benevolence, are shining features of our national character; that Freedom, Courage, and Confidence, are interwoven into all our transactions;—but we reflect with sorrow and shame, that Covetousness, Luxury, and Extravagance, have infected all classes, and done much to destroy those tender sensibilities of

our nature which form the most delightful sympathies of life.—We dwell with wonder and admiration, on the hospitals and charitable institutions, which have arisen for providing for the poor, and comforting the afflicted;—but we are sometimes compelled to doubt whether these are the fruits of real charity, or only the appendages of aggrandizement and ostentation.—We boast of the discoveries made in Science and Philosophy; and a Wedgwood, an Arkwright, and a Watt, have immortalized their names by their inventions for increasing the productive Powers of Labour;—but the Genius and Philanthropy which, nursed by Contemplation and a sympathy with Human Woe, devotes itself to the means of lessening Misery, and alleviating the sorrow of the Prisoner, has been the ornament of another period.

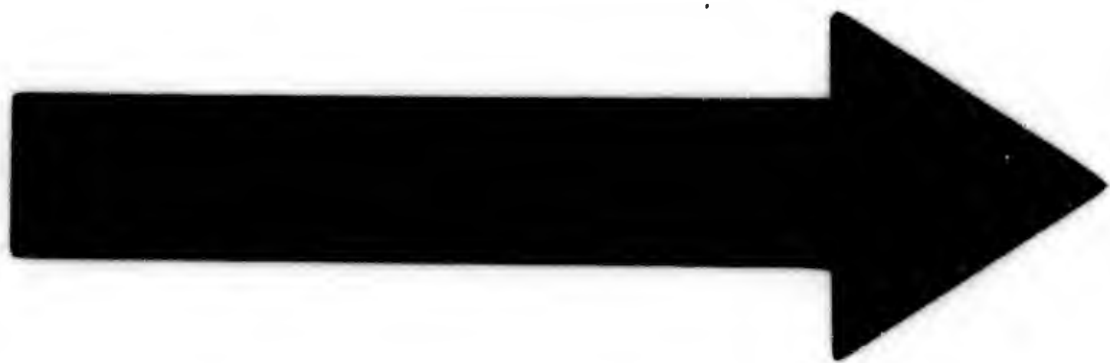
Throughout the Land, we see the Poor instructed by the Rich;—but we lament that many who are anxious to admit the light of natural knowledge, shut out the cheering beams of Religion.—And whilst all classes are striving to excel in mental capacity, wealth, and distinction, the virtues of moderation, humility, and that “wisdom which cometh from above,” are esteemed of little price; the head is cultivated, and the understanding exalted, but the heart, the nobler part of man, is neglected “like an unweeded garden, that grows to seed.”

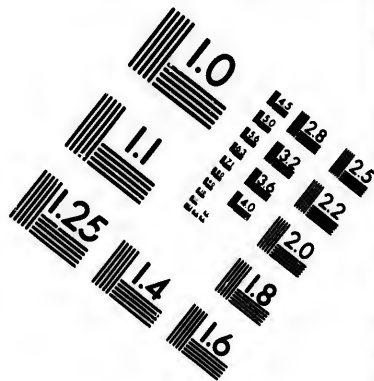
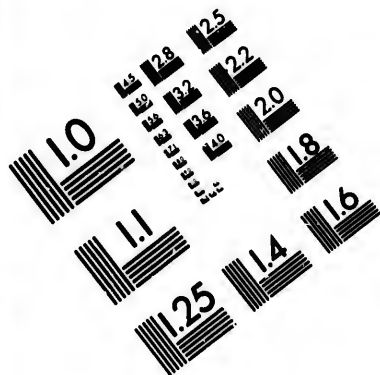
Perplexed with anxious doubts, arising from such reflections, we ask ourselves whether these are the attributes of true greatness? Whether Economy, Moderation, and a Love of Peace, have ceased to be virtues? Whether happiness is increased in proportion to renown in Arms and Arts? Whether the generous affections of the soul are expanded, and the heart enlarged, by grasping after Wealth and Power?—Whether a Country can continue to flourish, where Luxury and Extravagance prevail in private life, Corruption and wasteful expenditure in public?—Whether England can maintain her Trade and Manufactures, when her Constitution is enfeebled, and her Liberties impaired?—Whether what still remains of these might not be preserved without the aid of 140,000 bayonets?

Recollecting that the best of human blessings have arisen from Calamity; that the vices and profligacies of Leo X produced a reformed religion in Europe, and the uncontrolled Despotism of the Stuarts, a better government at home; we inquire, with painful solicitude, whether we are doomed to endure the extreme of Evil, in order that Good may follow?—Whether the Thunder must roll, and the Tempest rage around us, before we can enjoy a purer air, and a serener sky?

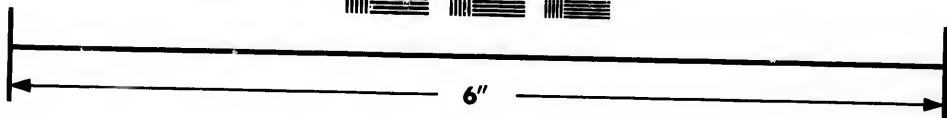
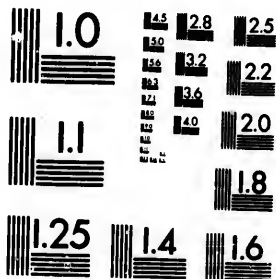
One of the worst symptoms of the age, is that lukewarmness, that indifference to the public good, which has arisen from our growing luxury and extravagance.—Many good and honest members of the commonwealth do not scruple to declare, that having lost their confidence in the leading men of both the parties who have been Ministers of the Crown, they are indifferent who has the direction of our affairs.—Some are weak enough, without fear or jealousy, to enter the ranks of an administration who have uniformly shown themselves the advocates of War and Extravagance, never the friends of Economy and Reform;—and all persons of any degree of rank or influence, seem resolved to abstain from any co-operation with the great mass of the people, who, taking the alarm, are re-asserting their rights, or impelled by hunger and the calls of a clamorous offspring, are imploring relief from Parliament.

But if the People, who are groaning beneath their difficulties, find themselves deserted by those whom they used to look to as their friends, it is to be apprehended they may be persuaded, by the evil councils of ignorant or designing men, that there is no remedy but in the complete subversion of all law and order;—they may foolishly imagine, that by the destruction of the masses of property which have been accumulated in the hands of a few, they shall improve their situa-





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tion; they may become inflamed with despair, and resort to violence, from a conviction that no change can aggravate their sufferings.

The Author of the Spirit of Laws has truly said, “ La servitude commence toujours par le “ sommeil.” — The symptom may be traced amongst the higher ranks ; but the body of the people in this Country are not yet, and never will be lulled into repose;—and if wisdom and moderation are wanting, to guide their restless spirits, they may raise such a tempest in the Land, as will sweep away all the emblems of our renown, break up the springs of Industry, cancel the Charter of our Liberties, and reduce us, by one dreadful blow, to a state of Barbarism. For in this Country, we cannot long retain our industry without freedom, and when they are both gone, the decline into Barbarism must quickly follow. Mr. Hume, indeed, in observing upon the unfavourable prospect of our affairs when he wrote, declared his opinion, that as the Country would probably never re-establish a perfect plan of liberty, a mild *despotism* was the most likely to succeed; “ An absolute monarchy,” says he, “ is “ the easiest death, the true *Euthanasia* of the “ British Constitution,” — Either of the alternatives is too shocking to contemplate.

Let all who have the love of their Country at heart, solemnly consider that if our Liberties

should languish, and our Commerce, which has grown up with them, begin to decay, the awful responsibility will rest with them, should they not have exerted every effort to remove the evils which have crept into the Commonwealth. The hour is even now at hand, when we shall witness the mighty struggle between Corruption and Patriotism. If the former be not vanquished, farewell, Britons, to the boasted Glory of your Island!—farewell your Strength, your Honour, your manly Independence!—farewell the cheerful sounds of Industry in your fields and villages, the bustle of Trade in your great towns. Your Commerce will take wing and flee to other climes; your merchants will gradually quit their unprofitable occupations;—and nothing remain of all your greatness, but melancholy cities, and unfrequented ports; a drooping Population, and half-cultivated fields;—a Peasantry without industry or independence, a Gentry without riches or spirit, and a Nobility and Princes destitute of generous sentiments and high conceptions.

We cannot, however, indulge these gloomy anticipations; let us not fear that we shall so disgrace the character which has been stamped upon us for ages. The People are enlightened, brave, and attached to their Country:—They understand their rights, and know how far they have been infringed upon or suspended:—They have only to persevere, without violence or

intemperance, and it is not in the power of any minister or body of men to resist their demands. They are convinced that it is in the power of Government to do much to alleviate their sufferings; and Government cannot refuse to answer their just expectations, provided *they* perform faithfully the part which always rests with them, of pursuing their duties as Citizens, whilst they continue to bear up against the unavoidable pressure of the times, and to urge their representations to the Throne or to Parliament, with loyalty and respect.

But it is not, Sir, by such means as have been recommended by the Meeting at the London Tavern, that the distresses of the Nation are to be alleviated, and the difficulties of the times surmounted. It is not by distributing £1000 amongst the unemployed weavers in Bolton; £500 (with the Watch and Ward Bill) to the discontented hosiers of Nottingham and Leicester; and £300 to the pining and despairing Population of the Iron districts, that effectual relief is to be administered.* The poor sufferers

* In order to show the small extent, to which this fund produces the relief intended, I give an extract of a letter from one of the managers at Bolton: "The money sent has been £100 per week, and we expect they will continue it, till we have received £1000. — The proportion in which this £100 was divided, was in the first week 2s 6d, since then about 1s 6d per family, per week, and no family to be relieved, whose average weekly earnings exceeded 1s 6d per head; that is, supposing a man, his wife, and four children, get altogether above 9s in the week, to have nothing.

are so humbled, and their spirits so bowed down, that they can no longer refuse the smallest pittance that may be tendered: but weakened as they are with the effects of poverty, and utterly unable to maintain their families; though hope is nearly extinguished, and their bosoms are sinking into sadness and despair, they must feel a sentiment of honest indignation, when they listen to the language and observe the conduct of those who dole out to them these miserable alms.

When misery hath visited every corner of this Island, and the husbandman and artisan have sickened in hopeless penury during a long season; — when the situation of the Country is becoming daily more critical, and the seasons have been so unpropitious that the price of Corn is become most alarming, it would require all the fortitude that wisdom can inspire, and religion enforce, in the most enlightened minds, to bear up against the pressure. — In vain then is it for the great ones of the Earth, to wrap themselves in dignified security, and with cold complacency to say to a hungry and despairing multitude, “*Be strong, fear not.*” * — If they do indeed sympathize with their unfortunate brethren, let them meet their exigencies by measures that will not only raise up the feeble sufferers, but support them afterwards; — “The

* “*Nous avons tous assez de force pour supporter les maux d' autrui.*”

“relief must not be tossed and turned in flattering words;” it must be a substantial sacrifice;—an abandonment of all wasteful and corrupt expenditure.—It is an insult to a People, who are groaning beneath an accumulation of debt, that alone requires annually forty-two millions sterling to satisfy the demands upon it, to say to them, “*Be still;*”—They may be still; so is the famished wolf, who knows no law but force, and watches his opportunity.—It is a mockery to talk to a People that are weighed down with taxation, of *temporary distress*, and a *revulsion of Trade*.—I am aware these expressions were not the suggestions of your Royal Highness’s own mind: you, Sir, were taken by surprise; and your Royal Highness must be sensible, that such language is calculated only to protract and increase the evil, by holding out expectations which cannot be realized.—But I must hasten to a conclusion.

The War, which imparted to the Government extraordinary vigour, and to the Nation a dangerous exertion of strength, has left us exhausted in the arms of Peace.—Calamity confines not itself to any particular class of the community; it visits alike the Peasant and the Peer. The poor labourers collect in riotous assemblages to demand employment, and they find no masters; the starving artisans ask for bread, and are shown

the sword; the Merchants and Ship-owners arise, from their feverish rest, only to hear of fresh losses, and encounter new difficulties; the Landowners are levying their rents by distress, and are themselves ground by the harsh process of the law;—Government are occupied in issuing executions for taxes; the whole community is visited with affliction; and we are brought, at the close of the War, to feel ourselves the miseries which we have been inflicting on the rest of the World.

We believe, however, that we may look at our difficulties and dangers without dismay, and in time redeem the state of our affairs, if we are true to ourselves,—the Government to the People, and the People to the Government. But we see the Legislature lending their continued support to the extravagance of Ministers, and the unreasonable expectations of the Landowners. For two years they have attempted to keep up unnatural prices, and a forced cultivation of Corn, in order to support, by undue advantages, the agricultural interests; the seasons have favoured their wishes, by preventing an overgrowth, and diverting the discontent of the people. But the nation are attentive to these partial efforts, and expect that the interests of a few shall not be promoted at the expense of the whole. They ask for Economy, Retrenchment, and a reduc-

tion of corrupt Expenditure; in order that the poor may be effectually succoured, and the public creditor be paid his just demands. They inquire why they are to support an immense standing army in time of Peace? they are told the state of this Country as well as of Europe require it; they cannot help thinking, Sir, that it is the army which makes the army necessary,—that if the Country is to be defended against itself, there is a more constitutional means of doing it; and they require, in the name of Loyalty and Patriotism, that it should be resorted to.

I believe, Sir, the maintenance of so great a force arises not from any arbitrary design, nor do the people suspect it; but they know the tendency of power to extend itself, and they have seen the people of other countries sleep. They will not therefore slumber; but will continually remind Parliament, that the maintenance of such a force is not only expensive, but may become, at some future period, dangerous to our liberties.

At the commencement of the glorious engagement which terminated his life, the illustrious Nelson displayed at his mast-head that celebrated signal; "*England expects every man to do his duty.*" This simple but sublime admonition, has of late been peremptorily pressed upon the suffering people of this Country, by the subordinate agents

of government, and by the highest authorities of the State. From those, whose rank and circumstances are calculated, in common times, to give them influence in society, we have heard most eloquent eulogiums upon the virtue of patient endurance, and submission to unavoidable evil.— Sir, these exhortations to duty may in the abstract be strictly justifiable, but they will be heard with deference only in proportion as they are supported by example. It was observed of two French Captains, equally skilled in the art of War, that the one was almost always successful, and the other almost always unsuccessful; the former was in the habit of calling to his soldiers *Allons*. whilst the other said *Allez*. In the great work which lies before us, all hands must unite, or we are undone. The situation in which we are placed calls no less loudly upon the higher orders for retrenchment and liberality, than upon the lower classes for patience and fortitude.

It has been justly observed Sir, that the genius of the English populace is by no means hostile to rank and power. By mere decency of conduct, seasoned with a little condescension, personages of the most eminent stations easily become the objects even of public idolatry. I know that I am treading on delicate ground; but I shall not shrink from respectfully reminding you, that the youthful errors of certain of the branches of your illustrious House, have from time to time been

kindly overlooked, or generously forgiven; — and that though application after application has been made, to liquidate the debts, and to increase the allowances of the Royal family, the Nation has viewed them rather with hope as to the future, than with resentment as to the past. But, Sir, there is a limit beyond which endurance cannot extend; and if, in this period of general distress, the public ear is pained with the report of Royal revelry and princely profusion; — and especially if the remonstrances of the people are rejected with the sternness of rebuke,* resentment will rankle deeply in the general feeling, retrospects of the most unpleasant nature will be entered into, — and the constitutional pillars which support the Throne will be shaken. But let us hope for better things. Let us indulge the expectation that the highest orders of the State will set an example of that virtuous frugality, which is now the order of the day; and that the complaints of a distressed populace, even though couched in uncourtly language, will be met with the soothing language of urbanity and condolence.

It is the bounden duty of the Ministers of the Prince Regent, diligently and firmly to carry

* See the answer to the Petition of the Common Council, in Appendix B.

these principles into practice; but it is to be lamented that, in the discharge of this duty, they have hitherto by no means evinced a proper degree of promptitude. The prominent features of the last session of Parliament were the resisting of Retrenchment, and disguising the extravagances of the Civil List. Let Ministers beware how they play this game any longer. The cupidity of Mr. Croker is a hardy plant; but it must bend before the tempest of the times.—Nor do I think that my Lord Arden, who, whilst in the receipt of above £20,000 per annum, from a sinecure office, was so solicitous about the maintenance of the family of his newly murdered brother, will long deem it prudent to place his sinecure and his freehold estate upon the same footing in point of title. Reductions must be made in those public disbursements which affect the public mind with particular indignation. It may be said—indeed it has been said—that the aggregate amount of these reductions can be but small. It may be so;—I believe it is so. But the great point to be gained by this species of Retrenchment, is the removal of irritation. The people of England, if they are fairly dealt with, will make every exertion, and will submit to every privation, incumbent in the course of events upon beings endued with reason; but they will not make bricks without straw; and

whilst they are sternly told by the law of Pauperism, that "he who will not work, neither shall he eat," in the hour of their exigency, they will demand, that the same measure be meted to the noble and honourable Paupers, who prey upon the vitals of the State.

Sir, it is a fact, as undeniable as it is melancholy, that for the last three months one-half of our Population have subsisted upon charity. The burthen of eleemosynary donations has been almost entirely borne by the middle orders of the community, who are themselves continually more and more stinted in the means of support. This state of things cannot possibly last long. I trust indeed that the time is approaching, when our Commerce and our national prosperity will begin to revive; but dreary is the wilderness through which we have to pass to the land of promise. — The People have performed their duty, and await the convocation of Parliament in anxious suspense; with mixed sensations of despair and hope, they again make their solemn appeal to the great Council of the Nation. Meantime, internal discord broods over the State; — and nothing but that spirit of unanimity in retrenchment, and that generosity of mutual support, which ought assiduously to be nurtured by every functionary of Government, and every

member of the Legislature, can preserve us from the horrors of Civil tumult, or the chains of Despotism imposed by an over-awed, but what is still worse, by a venal Parliament.

October 31, 1816.

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POSTSCRIPT.

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*On the supposed effects of our Debt and Taxes upon our Commerce and Manufactures.*

14TH JANUARY, 1817.

IN the preceding pages, I have hinted at the wonderful power which the Commerce of this Country has manifested at different periods, in redeeming the State from its difficulties and burthens, consequent upon the waste and extravagance of War. This subject would admit of much interesting examination, and might be fully illustrated by the History of our Trade and Foreign Expenditure, during the present Reign. It is the fashion, however, even in England, (perhaps arising in some measure from the partiality shown by the ablest writers of our times to the system of the French Economists,) to undervalue the importance of Manufactures and Foreign Trade, when



compared with Agriculture and internal Commerce; pains are taking at this moment to bend the public mind to this conviction, in order that the landed interest (whose support, in Parliament is essential to the Ministers at the present critical moment) may again set to work their machinery for keeping up the prices of landed produce, and be gratified by a degree of support incompatible with the interests of the whole community. It would not be difficult to show, that the value of the Foreign trade of this Country has been always under-rated by theoretical writers; that it has not only been the means of supporting our immense foreign expenditure in War, but has actually doubled the value of all the landed property; and by the ingenuity and activity of our merchants and manufacturers, has compelled the nations of Europe to pay a great portion of the taxes raised for carrying on our Wars.—The object of this short essay, however, is not to eulogize English Commerce, but to endeavour to show, how it will relieve itself from the present oppressive weight of taxation.

However the ordinary expenses of the state may be diminished, when the absolute necessity of it becomes apparent to Ministers, the sum required to pay the annual interest of the national debt alone, is alarming by its magnitude. And we have shown, that in consequence of the Fundholders receiving their dividends at a fixed sum, whilst all descriptions of property are fallen very much, they are in fact receiving 30 or 35 per cent more from the rest of the community, than they did when the currency was so much more extensive.

Whilst we had a great monopoly of Trade, to many parts of the world, and the free vent which existed during the War, for the surplus produce of our land and our

mines, we went forwards in the career of our prosperity, and all classes (excepting perhaps the Fundholders) were increasing in wealth. But at this moment, we all feel how much our situation is changed; we have, indeed, the same labour and ingenuity, with the same capital, and a greater surplus produce to dispose of; and we have the same persons to be clothed, fed, and lodged, with the same habits and tastes as formerly: we ought, therefore, it may be said, to carry on the same real Trade we used to do, excepting that of being carriers and bankers for the belligerents and other states which were reduced by the War. In the preceding Letter, I have endeavoured to show that our Trade has suffered principally from our farmers having been paralyzed in their exertions, and curtailed in their domestic expenses; my object now is to show that our Commerce, (by which I understand our Foreign Trade, and the Manufactures dependent upon it) will not only be enabled, by its elasticity and power, to bear its own share of the public burdens, and to sustain the competition of the cheaper Countries of Europe, but to raise up our agricultural interests by the only effectual means, a gradual increasing consumption of Corn, cattle, &c. at home.

It will be admitted, that if we were in a prosperous state, the extent of our Commerce (our monopoly being at an end) would depend upon the number and value of articles, the produce of Foreign countries, which could be disposed of here; and the number and value of the articles imported must depend simply upon the quantity and quality of those which we have to export, and give in exchange for them. But the effect of our present distress is, to enable us to export a larger quantity of the produce of our mines and manufactures, and at lower prices, both because there

is a great surplus of them from the War, and because the wages of our artisans are fallen, and are likely to continue low.—If wages advance, it can only be from an increased demand for labour, in which case the manufactures must be flourishing; if they remain where they are, probably no persons will contend that we shall be under-sold owing to the high rate of our wages.

It appears from our present, as well as previous experience, that the price of manufacturing labour is little affected by the price of Corn. The testimony of Lord Lauderdale, on this point, before the House of Lords, is very important; and that of Mr. Milne still more so, in as much as he unites extensive practical knowledge to great talents and observation. I have given, in the Appendix F, the comparative tables of the rates of labour, and prices of corn which he presented, with the reasons assigned by him in support of this opinion. Dr. A. Smith and Mr. Say maintain an opposite doctrine; they also maintain, in connexion with this subject, that a tax imposed on corn, or any other necessary of life, must raise the price of wages. Hume, who has made some important discoveries in the theory of Trade, asserts the contrary; he says, the artisan may either increase his labour, or retrench some of his expenses, or both; “that both resources are more easy and “natural than that of heightening his wages.”—He may, indeed, when Trade is very brisk, demand an advance, and if labourers are comparatively scarce he will get it; but otherwise, it appears proper and natural that he should bear the burthen of an advance in the price of his food, whether it arises from bad harvests, or from a contribution to the support of the state which protects him. As a general proposition, I think it must be admitted, that the price of labour depends, like that of every thing else, upon the relative proportion

of the supply and the demand;—the confusion and contradiction which are observable amongst writers on this subject, has arisen from Corn being regarded as the only regulator of the value of *labour*, and *labour* the only *standard measure* of the value of every thing; whereas it is clear, that no one thing can be an accurate measure of value, the real value of every commodity being precisely what it will bring in exchange for any or all other commodities.\*

All parties, however, admit that the effect of taxation and high prices of Corn, is to compel or induce the artisan to work harder, by which a greater surplus of exchangeable produce is created;—and if the pressure does not exceed the power of re-action, increased frugality and exertion produce a good effect, at least to the nation.

The principal causes of the high rates maintained for wages during the War, were the same that made every thing else dear, viz. the rapid growth of our luxury, riches, and paper-circulation. The same causes, aided by a more rapid increase in population, have produced the same effects in America. Though the taxes and national debt are so small, compared either with her own riches and population, or with our debt and taxes, the wages of all kinds of labour are generally much higher than in England. The reason is

\* I do not mean to assert, that the price of Corn has no effect upon the price of labour; it certainly has a very great one, but it operates slowly, and by no means to the extent generally supposed. Sir. F. M. Eden's work on the poor, shows that the articles of rent, clothing, fire, soap, candles, tea and sugar, constitute about as great a portion of the expenditure of the poor man's family as their bread; and meat, butter, milk, and potatoes, about half as much as their bread. Since he wrote, this proportion has probably varied in consequence of the increased luxury of the poor during the War; but it would now be more favourable to this argument; and it is very clear, both from experience and reasoning, that the effect of a rise or fall in Corn is very slow and comparatively small on the wages of all descriptions of labour, but especially on those of manufacturers in large towns;—(see again the tables in Appendix F.)

simply, that the demand for labour there exceeds the supply. As often as this was the case here, the same consequences regularly followed, in spite of the taxes and high prices of provisions. Now, when these are as high as ever, nothing can raise the rate of wages, because the supply of workmen exceeds the demand for labour, or rather the *same number of workmen bring a greater quantity of labour into the market*. Thus it is that the dearness of all things, arising from taxes and scarcities of provisions, (from which we apprehend so much injury to our manufactures,) tends to make labour cheap; and the evil seems to carry with it its own remedy.

As our wealth and prosperity become either stationary or on the decline, the supply of manufacturing labour exceeds the demand, and wages fall so low as to be on a par, nearly if not entirely, with those of the Continent. It is to be wished that they should not rise again so high as they used to be; and it is probable, that as the several nations of Europe regain their trade and mercantile confidence, and re-establish a paper currency, (which will have the effect of raising their prices generally,) these circumstances will gradually bring about that approximation to an equality between their markets and ours, which is so desirable. We must by degrees adapt ourselves to the system of Europe; and in all exchangeable commodities, our prices will in due time fall, and theirs rise so much (excepting where prohibitory laws interfere,) that the difference will principally consist in the expense of transportation and insurance. The climate and habits of this country, are, however, much more favourable to manufactures than those of any of our European competitors; we have also got our Commerce and manufactures firmly established, and supported by the most wonderful complication of machinery, an immense capital, and a general taste for a variety

of those luxuries which have become almost necessities to the great bulk of our population; whilst our rivals have to create their commerce anew, and to meet us in markets pre-occupied by our enterprise.\*

We cannot but condemn the extreme of luxury which has prevailed in this country during the War; but it may be hoped that it will be softened down, by the change which is now taking place, into that degree of refinement and gratification, which is highly favourable to happiness and virtue, at the same time that it forms the great support of commerce.—Whilst other countries, therefore, are making experiments in trade, we shall be working on a sure foundation, viz. the habits and tastes for imported articles; and the means of furnishing the same quantity and quality of manufactured goods which we used to do. If our exports

\* Not only is our industry greater in itself than that of other countries of Europe, but even the gratifications and indulgences of our labouring Manufacturers are conformable to it. The alehouse and the club, however undesirable on other accounts, are more favourable to hard labour and great exertion, than the more simple tastes and amiable amusements prevalent amongst the Continental workmen. Even the lowest order of Frenchmen must sacrifice to the Graces, and at the expense of Wealth will pursue those little elegancies of life which our English Peasant despises or laughs at, and the value of which our Weavers cannot comprehend. It appears to me, these sons of gaiety are in the right; and I have been delighted to behold them assembling in the neighbourhood of the Cotton Factories at Rouen, to weave the festive dance, in the mild radiance of the summer's evening.

And is not the German or the Swiss equally wise, to relieve the fatigue of the day by making up a concert of music amongst his family and neighbours, rather than adopt the system of our Manufacturers, by which they destroy the harmony of their families and of their own minds?

Are we to fear the competition of the Italians, who sacrifice daily to Thalia? or the Spaniards, whose lofty souls, despising alike active gaiety or labour, are wrapped in the contemplation of their own dignity, and consider no society—no government—no country equal to their own?

But the ruling passion of the English, a love of Power and Wealth, which pervades the lowest classes, is not unfavourable to the growth of our Manufactures. Our poorest labourer must well remember that, (however he may now talk and think,) he long boasted of Ruling the Waves and the World, and he sighed like another Alexander, for other worlds, to render tributary to our arms and ingenuity.

continue as good and as numerous as heretofore, they will exchange for the same quantity and value of articles the produce of other countries, which we may require, either for our consumption, or for working again into manufactures. It signifies nothing what internal arrangements we make, by what contrivances we raise our taxes, or to what amount;—whether our national debt be 750 millions, and our taxes 65 millions, as in 1813, or our national debt 250 millions, and our revenue 15 millions, (as it perhaps was in 1793,) or whether we have no debt and taxes whatever.

As long, therefore, as our industrious habits, and a taste for Luxury, exist in England amongst all classes, we need not apprehend being injured in our foreign trade by the weight of Taxes, the high price of wages, or our extreme paper Circulation, which raise the price of every thing in England so much higher than in any other Country in Europe. The consumers of all articles which we import, must pay to the Merchant who imports them, such prices as he finds necessary to indemnify him, and enable him to pay the Manufacturer for the Calico or Hardware, and the Shipowner for the expense of transportation. It is immaterial whether the Merchant pays for the Calico the same price he used to do before the War, or 50 per cent more, or 50 per cent less; it is immaterial whether he pays more or less than the same can be produced for in other Countries where it is made: he brings back some article in return, which the people of England want, and must purchase from him at such a price as will indemnify him, for the labour and capital employed. It does not signify to him whether he pays at Manchester £400 for 10 trunks of Calicoes, and sells them for 10 hhd's of Tobacco in New York, which neat him in Liverpool £500; or whether he pays £200

only for the same quantity of Calicoes, and sells them in New York for 10 hhds of Tobacco which bring £250; in either case the profit is equal. If we consume less Tobacco, some time may elapse before we shall exchange our Calicoes for other articles which may be found adapted to our wants or tastes; but the Merchant may always rest assured, that in the long run he will indemnify himself, by the *Sales of his Returns*, for whatever the Manufacturer may charge him in *his Invoices*.

Nor is the case altered, as affects our foreign trade, when we export articles which cost more than the same articles can be produced for in other Countries. It may be said, that if we send our Manufactures abroad, to compete with those of Germany and France, which (we will suppose) can be produced for one-fourth less, we cannot maintain our ground, and such Manufactures, as far as they depend on the Export demand, must decline.—In reply we may explain, that it is only a nominal disadvantage under which we appear to labour. To illustrate this, we will suppose E ships from London 5000 yards of Calicoes to Hamburg, which cost 2s a yard, and amount to £500;—and that F in like manner ships from Rouen 5000 yards of Calicoes, which cost only 1s 6d a yard, and amount to £375. They meet in the market at Hamburg, and find they can obtain 1s 9d per yard, which appears to leave F a profit of 17 per cent, and to be a clear loss of  $12\frac{1}{2}$  per cent to E.—But this is only apparent, and the matter is settled in reality in the following manner:—E purchases as much Wheat, or Flaxseed, or Tallow, with his proceeds, (amounting to only £437 10s,) as will sell in England for £550, leaving him a gainer on the whole transaction of £50; whilst F, who wishes to get back his £437 10s, (being the amount of his invoice, and 17 per cent profit, buys as



much of some article or other as will sell in France for £412 10s, leaving exactly the same profit as E obtained, viz. 10 per cent on his original shipment. But it may be asked, if the returns are received in Gold or Bills, instead of commodities, will the Merchant stand in the same situation? I answer, he will not be either better or worse; because he will pay a proportionate premium for them; they will rise in value (or what amounts to the same thing, other articles will fall in value) in proportion to the demand for them abroad, at the same time that they will fall in value (or what is the same thing, all other commodities will rise) according to their abundance here. — All inequalities of this sort are regulated by the exchanges, in a way which the practical Merchant easily comprehends.

It is probable, indeed, that as France grows enough of Wheat, Flax, &c. for her own wants, F will find great difficulty in bringing home his funds, and may pay 3 or 4 per cent for the transit of Gold or Silver. Thus whilst France made a boast that the balance of trade was in her favour, England would find it more advantageous to bring home something to create new wants, and excite new industry, and would justly rejoice that the balance of trade was against her. — There is no mystery in all this; the same quantity of labour adds the same real value to the Calicoes in England as in France; and the nominal value is of no more consequence than the name or description of the man who wove the Calicoes, or the tonnage of the ship that carried them. England only asks *an equivalent* for her exports, (whether consisting of raw materials, or labour combined with them, and no country can obtain for her products *more than such equivalent*. Nothing can ever prevent us from receiving a fair return for our industry, when trade is left to itself; and it must be admitted

that, in this country, Government have in general been cautious not to impede the channels of industry, or to interfere by oppressive regulations in the operations of foreign Commerce.

So far, however, are we at present from being apparently undersold by the Foreign manufacturers, that our Cottons, Woollens, Hardware, &c. have been produced cheaper, by our superior skill and industry, than in any other part of the world; and even since the return of Peace, we have undersold all our competitors in the markets of Europe. The triumph of labour and ingenuity has been complete; and as long as these qualities continue to be so eminently characteristic of our country as they are, we have nothing to fear from Foreign competition.

As far as respects our Foreign trade, therefore, we need not apprehend much evil from the present extent of our Taxes, our Funding, and our Paper-system; the operations of Commerce will rectify all seeming inequalities, and smooth all apparent difficulties, unless the consumption of those articles of foreign growth, which have become almost necessaries, fall off, and no other articles can be substituted; which is not likely to be the case in this country, except we revert to a state of barbarism.

Since the American War, our debt has been nearly quadrupled; yet we have in that period been progressively prosperous. Our Paper-system has attained such perfection, that nine-tenths of all the payments in the kingdom are made within the space of one hour in each day, at the Banker's clearing house in London. We scarcely know the use of the precious metals, excepting as ornaments; we do not wish to be encumbered with them as money. In spite of

the complaints of the discontented, and the fears of the timid, therefore, we may congratulate ourselves on having arrived at that proper estimate of the value of Gold and Silver which no other people have attained.\*

The principal Writers upon Political Economy, have taken pains, in inveighing against the accumulation of *Public Debts*, to enforce two propositions that appear not to be well supported.—They say, that if there were no National Debt, the same capital would be employed in aiding different branches of productive labour;—and that if our Debt were paid off, it would be invested in Land, Trade, or some employment that might be likely to yield a better return. It appears, however, that in this Country, the cultivation of our lands has followed the progress of our Debt, and our internal Trade, as well as our Foreign Commerce, have been gradually increasing in the same proportion. Indeed it must be evident on a little reflection, that the bulk of the Debt is actually invested in Agriculture, Commerce, and all Trades in which the aid

\* Behold, reader! in Sir. T. More's description of Utopia, the true picture of your own happy country :

“ Whenever they are engaged in War, (which is the only occasion in which their treasure can be usefully employed,) they make use of it to hire Foreign troops. They have no use for money amongst themselves, but keep it as a provision against the event of War, and they value it no farther than it deserves, that is for its actual use. So that it is plain they must prefer Iron to Gold or Silver; for men can no more live without Iron than without fire or water; but nature has marked out no use for these other metals so essential as not easily to be dispensed with. The folly of men has enhanced the value of Gold and Silver, because of their scarcity, whereas on the contrary, it is the opinion of the Utopians that nature, as an indulgent parent, has freely given us all the best things in great abundance, such as water and earth, but has laid up and hid from us the things that are vain and useless” — Thus it is evident, that in our opinions concerning that most important article, *money*, we are arrived at a perfect system; it may be presumed the Utopians had a National Bank likewise for the issue of Notes, although Sir T. More does not make mention of it; but they probably did not pay a million and a half annually for the management of it, as we do; (see Mr. Grenfell's spirited speech on this subject.)

of great capitals is required; for although a part of the money borrowed was disbursed in foreign Countries, to pay our troops and subsidize our Allies, yet it has been shown, in the preceding pages, how much our manufactures benefited even from this; and it is clear that our *Landowners* and *Merchants* also experienced considerable advantage, in the enhanced prices which they obtained for the Corn and Provisions sent to the Belligerent Countries, and the Colonial Produce shipped to the Continent.—But a great portion of the Loans made to Government was literally the conversion of surplus or idle wealth, into an employed and active capital. The money came through the medium of the London Bankers, from all parts of the Kingdom, in such portions as persons of property could spare from their regular pursuits; and it found its way very soon into active circulation, by being paid in large masses to the makers of Guns, Gunpowder, and Army Clothing and Accoutrements, to the Contractors for Horses, and for Corn, Bread, Provisions, &c. and by being disbursed through the Dock Yards, the Ordnance, the Victualling, and the other departments of Government;—from all of which it quickly found its way to the Shopkeepers, Merchants, Manufacturers, and all the employers of large capitals, giving a new spur to industry in every stage of its progress.

It is true there has been a great waste of wealth in the course of this circulation, a great quantity wholly destroyed, and it has ended in producing irregularities in the distribution of property, which have been extremely inconvenient and burthensome to some classes of the community. In time of War, the *nominal value* of all things has gone on increasing, in consequence of the Funding and the Paper-system; and all productive labourers, all the active and industrious classes, have indemnified themselves,—the poor

workman by requiring advanced wages, and the Farmer, the Merchant, and Manufacturer, by selling their produce at a correspondent advance; but the income of the annuitant has remained the same as it was 20 years ago; he only receives his 3 to 5 per cent, whilst the others have realized 6 to  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent per annum. The Agriculturist has found his employment, which in all other Countries is a mere drudgery, and a bare livelihood to men of the lowest rank, afford scope for talent, enterprise, capital, and skill; whilst Commerce and Manufactures have flourished in a degree wholly without precedent in the annals of the world. But we have seen, in the last two years, to what a dreadful reverse we have been exposed. The immoderate extent of our circulation (which produced an overgrowth of Corn) has been checked in an alarming manner by the superabundance of our Harvests. The consequences have been distrust on the part of the capitalists, distress and ruin throughout the labouring portion of the community, and alarm and want of confidence and co-operation amongst all classes.

Mr. Say, in his treatise on Political Economy, asserts, that if the National Debt were paid off, it would be invested in employing new labour, and producing new wealth to the nation. This appears to be impossible, in as much as a great portion of it has been already so engaged; and every department of our national industry is filled both with capital stock and labourers to such a degree, that the former is overflowing into the funds of other nations, and the latter are, in many districts, desirous of removing to other Countries, where labour is not so superabundant a commodity.

It is amusing to review the opinions of our greatest writers on the fate of our Funding System and Paper-currency.—Dr. A. Smith, in his third volume of the

“Wealth of Nations,” in treating on the effect of Taxes on *Land* and *Capital Stock*, after explaining that these are the principal sources of all revenue, both private and public, points out how injuriously they are affected by the rise in prices of all the conveniences and necessaries of life. He says, in conclusion, “To transfer the greater part of the Revenue arising from *Land* and *Capital Stock*, from those who are immediately interested in maintaining the good condition of the one, and the good management of the other, to a set of persons who have no such particular interest, (as is the case with the Fundholders,) must in the long run occasion the *neglect of the land*, and the waste or removal of *Capital Stock*.” Then, after illustrating this position, he concludes,—“The practice of funding has gradually weakened every state which has adopted it. Is it likely that in Great Britain alone, a practice which has brought either weakness or desolation upon every other Country, will prove altogether innocent?”—Blackstone, Hume, and Price, all adopt the same mode of reasoning. The last, in his treatise on the American War, pursues it thus: “Were there no public Debt, we should do with half the Taxes, our Paper-currency would be reduced, Specie would flow in upon us, and the Balance of Trade would become in our favour.—Amongst the causes which may produce a failure of Paper-currency amongst us, are first an unfavourable balance of Trade, which takes away our gold, and secondly a great deficiency in the Revenue, which would destroy our paper. The *Bank* is the support of our *paper*, and the support of the Bank is the credit of Government. Let any one imagine what would follow, were it but suspected that the Taxes were so fallen off, as not to be productive enough to pay the interest of the Debt, and that in order to make up the deficiency, it was necessary to anticipate

“the Taxes, and borrow of the Bank. An alarm of the “most dangerous tendency would follow.—A sinking fund,” he concludes, “might save us in time; but we are come so “near the end of our resources, that there is no time left “for us.”—Thirty years have elapsed since this was written, in which period we have found more resources than ever, and our finances are at this moment less embarrassed than they frequently were before we had any public debt: there is still room therefore for making new prophecies; but that man must be inspired with great confidence, who will venture do so, when such authorities as we have referred to have proved so fallacious.

Hume admits that large National Debts promote Commerce, by exciting industry, increasing circulation, and enabling merchants and manufacturers to pursue their trades to a greater extent, and to sell for small profits, which is highly beneficial in their intercourse with other countries. But he says these are trifling advantages, when compared with the evils of great public debts. These he states to be, 1st, the undesirable influx of money into the Capital; 2nd, making labour and all provisions dear; or 3rd, oppressing the poor by a great burthen of taxes; 4th, making the Country tributary to Foreigners who hold funds in this Country; 5th, encouraging idleness; and 6th, he states the *principal evil* to be the prejudice that results to the State, considered as a body politic, in its transactions with other states. After thus particularizing the heads of the argument, he enters into a vague train of reasoning, which tends to enforce the moral and political evils of excessive taxation; but he does not say any thing further, as to its effects on industry and the distribution of property, than generally, that it encourages a numerous body of unproductive idlers, and he observes in another part, that such

a system may, in 500 years, cause the "posterity of those who now ride in coaches, and of those who are on the boxes, to change places, without affecting the Public." He asks whether any one can doubt that the Taxes necessary to pay the interest of the Debt, may be so excessive as to ruin a nation? — but he does not prove that the Nation is impoverished in proportion as it is taxed. Viewing England at this time, all persons admit that she possesses more of what is generally considered national wealth than she had before the War; and the question is, how the payment annually of 30 or 40 millions to the Fundholders, by the whole community, shall diminish it. As long as those who pay Taxes continue industrious, they will have the power, by the laws of labour, of re-producing with a profit, whatever sum they pay in taxes, each individual laying on, in the price of his labour or commodity, such a sum as will cover the amount of his Taxes. Thus all classes, excepting the Fundholders themselves, have the means of indemnifying themselves by their industry, as long as their exertions are not paralyzed;—the prices of all commodities are enhanced one-fourth or one-fifth part, and the whole community bear the weight pretty equally. But the number of Fundholders, who are strictly idlers, is comparatively small, and we may reasonably question whether there would not have been many more idlers, without the great taxation which the funding system has rendered necessary, than there now are in this busiest of all Countries. No doubt, indeed, can be reasonably entertained, that the taxation has had the effect of increasing the portion of industry in the State, and the number of productive labourers very much; and that as long as it continues to produce this effect, (that is, until it becomes so excessive as to paralyze exertion,) it will cause industry to rise upon the ruins of idleness, and by this



process bring about a continual revolution of property. The situation of the mere Fundholder must be stationary, when compared with that of the Farmer, Merchant, or Manufacturer; and though in times like the present, when the progress of wealth is not progressive, he may enjoy a temporary advantage, it is clear that in general, all the industrious classes must be gradually gaining ground upon him. The proportion of Fundholders, however, who are idlers, is not at present nearly so great as it was when Hume wrote, a very large amount of the Funds being held by those who are actively engaged in a variety of useful and productive occupations.

These writers appear indeed to be justified in their predictions in some measure, with respect to the irregularity and want of confidence which would arise at home, and which has arisen in the manner above explained, occasioning disorder in our *internal Trade*, dangerous inequalities in the distribution of property, and violent irregularities in the situation of the poor. On closer examination, however, it may be fairly questioned, whether these would not exist in a great degree in any highly populous, enterprising, and commercial nation, even without the existence of a heavy public debt and burthen of taxation.—They seem to be in a great measure the consequence of the unbounded spirit of enterprise and expense, attending commerce and luxury, and are found to exist now, in a remarkable manner, in the great community of America; where the debt, and all the expenses of government are so light, and the progress of wealth and general prosperity so flourishing.

Whether the excitements to exertion and enterprise arise from taxation, or from peculiarly favourable external and internal circumstances, or from both, (as appears to have

been the case in England,) the most skilful and industrious will gain the ascendancy; and the Merchants and Manufacturers, by the application of their capital and labour, will by degrees become Landowners; but in the course of this struggle, there will be many downfalls amongst the aspiring of the higher orders; occasional oppression of the labourers; and sometimes a general confusion and distress, such as we experience now, and such as America has felt, in no trifling degree, in her mercantile concerns and state of currency, as well as in her precocious manufactures.

It behoves us, likewise, seriously to consider the internal influence of our Taxes and whole system; whether they may not be so enormous, as to paralyze our industry, and thus produce an inability to continue the use of those imported commodities, which our tastes, habits, and general refinement, render at present necessary. If taxation be carried beyond a certain limit, it must be destructive of national wealth, and consequently of Foreign Commerce; the spirit and the independence of all classes must be borne down, and the most dreadful degree of degradation and slavery may ensue. The human body can only endure a certain portion of labour, and however powerful the tendency of great taxation may be in exciting industry, and thereby promoting wealth, it cannot be denied, that a degree of it may exist, so enormous, as to overcome the power of reaction. That we are now arrived at that period, some persons believe; we may, however, be permitted to doubt on this subject;—it is possible the annual income of the whole Nation, arising from Land, Mines, Manufactures, &c. may be found to have increased in a tolerably fair proportion with our increased burthens; and that the means by which the bulk of these Taxes are levied, will prevent their ever attaining that point. So large a share of

them are strictly *sumptuary*, that, as soon as they become burthensome to any considerable portion of the community, their amount necessarily diminishes, by the diminished use of the articles paying Excise and Custom duties. Government are then compelled to rest contented with a smaller Revenue, and to reduce their expenditure accordingly. We appear to be in this situation at the present period; and we may hope that this circumstance will do more towards bringing about economy and retrenchment in public affairs, than has been accomplished by the force of the Press, or the eloquence of the Senate. — In fact, the Chancellor of the Exchequer declared some time ago, that the taxation of this Country had reached its utmost limit; and at present it is evident many of the labouring classes work harder than they ought to do; but as long as the Country was in a condition to find employment for them, no serious evil was experienced;—they paid the £10 per annum which Mr. Preston estimates a poor man contributed in taxes, as easily as they could now pay 10s per annum.

History presents us with the most pathetic accounts of the depression of our Trade, and the bad prospects of our Manufacturers, at the close of all the Wars of the last century, in the years 1738, 1751, 1763, 1783; (*see Chalmers's Estimate, &c.*) The circumstances attending the late War, have been so different from those of any former period, that we cannot safely draw any other inference with respect to future prospects, by comparing them together, than the general one, that perseverance and industry will redeem the Country as they have done before; but it is necessary that we should let our industry and capital direct themselves to those employments for which our soil and climate, our talents, habits, and actual situation, compared with the

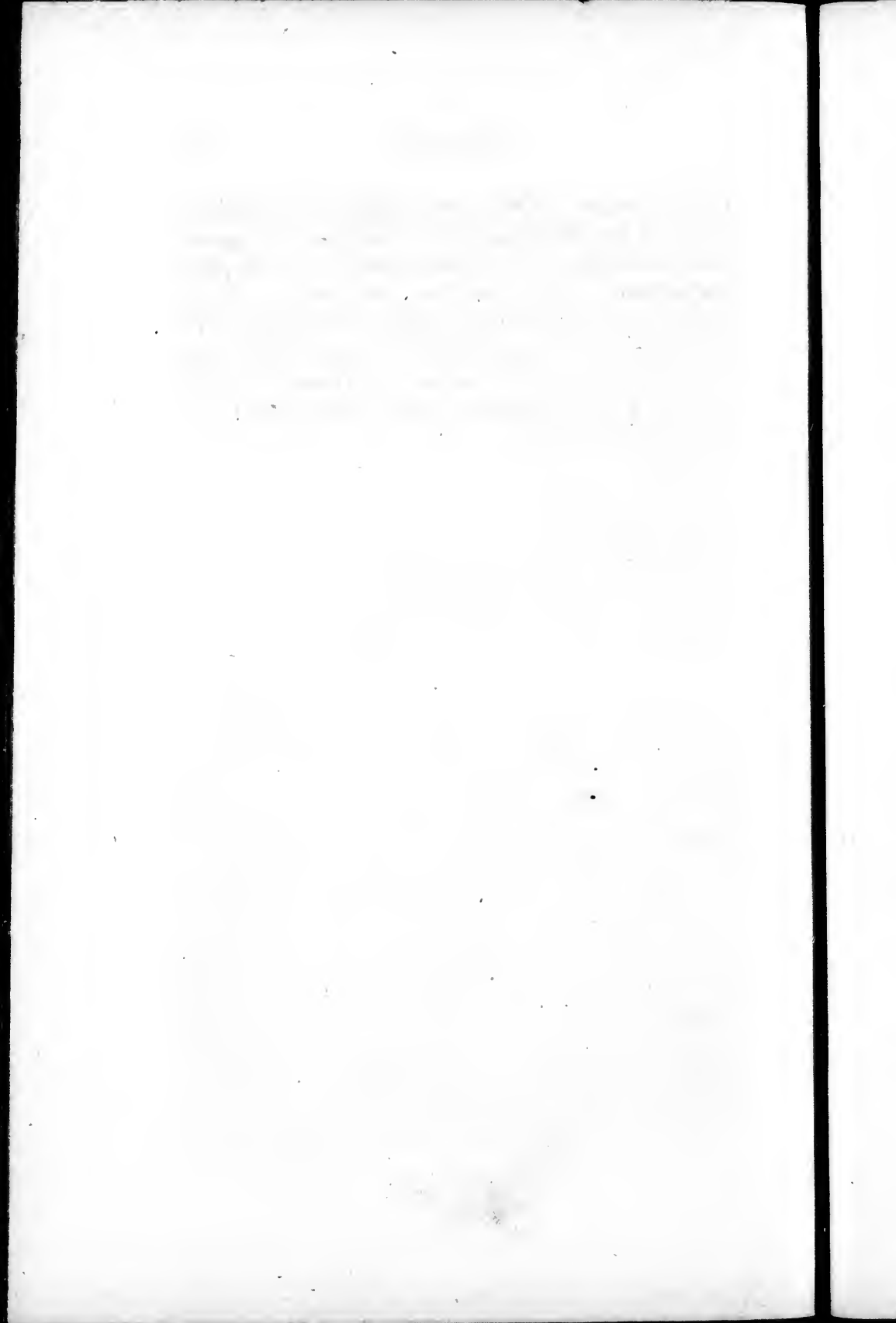
other European nations, seem peculiarly to fit us. By the exertions of all classes during the War, we at this time produce more from our Land, our Mines, and our Machinery, than we can exchange on advantageous terms, in our present situation: we hope to regain our prosperous condition by degrees; but in the mean time, all branches of industry must suffer, and the question is, whether Government ought, by legislative regulations, to force any one in particular to suffer more than its natural and inevitable share. It will not be contended that we are to grow a surplus of Corn, in order to bring trinkets and lace from France, as we did fifty years ago, to a large amount; and it is generally admitted that much land has been brought into tillage, which cannot be maintained without an enormous expense.—On the other hand it must be conceded, that some Manufactures have been forced unnaturally by bounties, (particularly the Silk-trade,) and they ought to be resigned to those Countries which are the best adapted to them; but there is no propriety nor wisdom in keeping up our forced overgrowth of Corn, at the expense of the great staples of Woollen, Cotton, Iron, &c. for which this Country is as peculiarly adapted as America is for the growth of Cotton and Tobacco, Poland of Corn, and France and Portugal of Wines.

During the War, the sale of our Manufactures was forced all over Europe, by the operation of our Foreign expenditure; we exported twenty millions to the Continental nations, and only received back ten or twelve millions in the produce of those Countries. The Manufacturers and Merchants are content to seek new markets now, or to lose the vent for any article which can be made better and cheaper in other Countries; but they trust that our Legislators, though they are for the most part

Landowners, will be more just and wise, than to force us to lose the markets for those articles in which our skill, capital, and genius prevail. If not, they will, by compelling the French and other Countries to manufacture more than they would otherwise do, injure our own natural and legitimate trade so much, as to impoverish their own best Customers, by which they will inevitably be the greatest sufferers in the end, though they may gain some temporary advantages. If we were to commence the growth of Cotton or Rice, no one, who understands the principles of Trade, can imagine we should be gainers; because we can obtain all the Cotton or Rice we require so much cheaper, by bartering our Woollens and Hardware for them in the United States of America. As long as we continue to force an overgrowth of Corn, we cannot dispose of our Manufactures but on very disadvantageous terms.

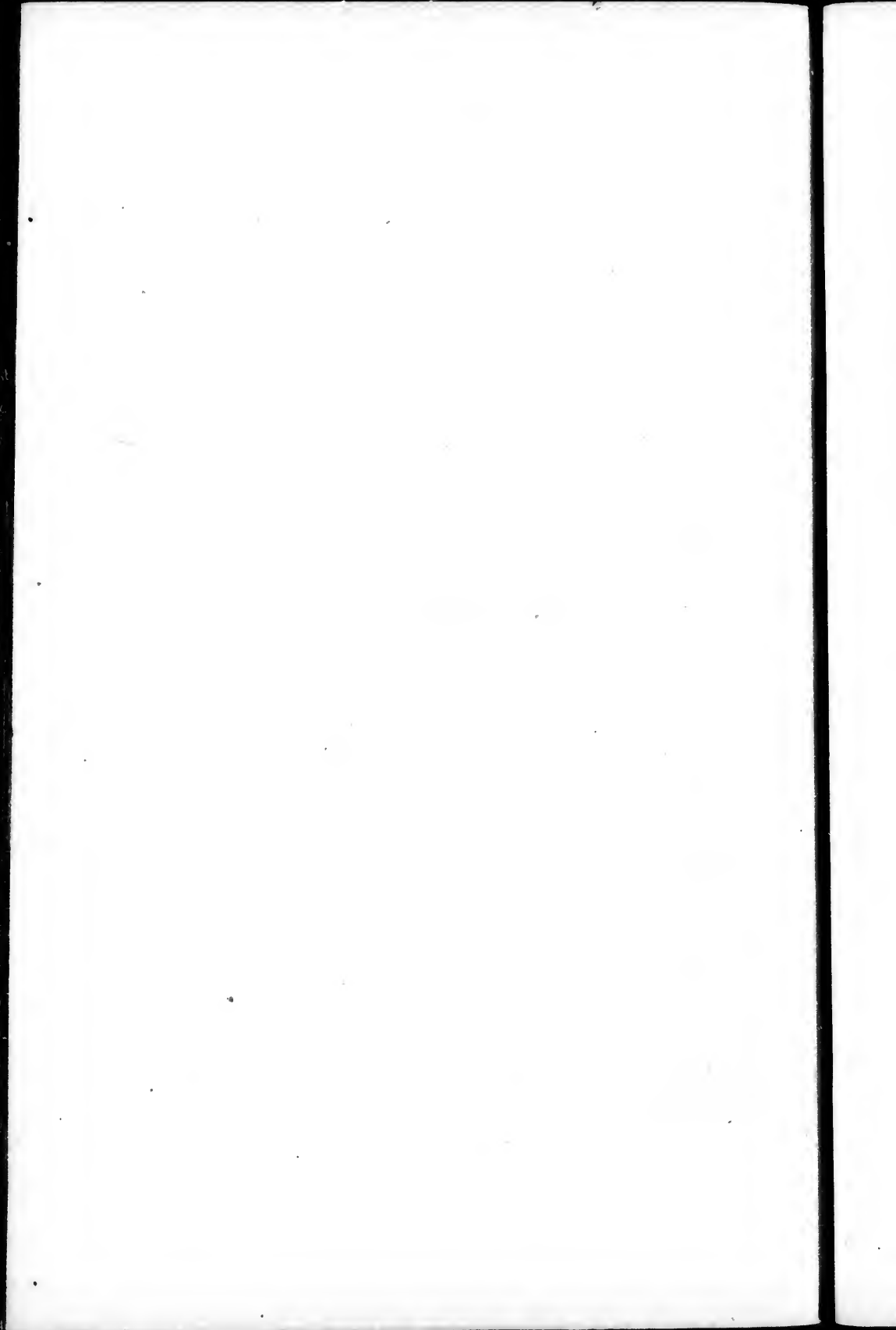
The War tended, by the monopoly it conferred, to dazzle our eyes, and conceal from us the truth which we must now learn, that each Country should pursue and excel in the particular trade to which its climate and productions lead; and the sooner we adapt our views and regulations to this principle, the sooner will our Trade revive. As long as our present system of restrictions at home, and partialities abroad, shall be continued, it must be hampered, and our recovery from the present state of stagnation be comparatively slow. But if we leave it gradually more to itself; if we permit it to find its own channels, and rise to its own level, so as to approach by degrees to the system of perfect freedom, (as quickly as our artificial state will prudently permit;) — the power of English labour capital, and ingenuity, will then become apparent;

they will support our Manufactures against all competition; they will not only raise up our shipping, and general mercantile interests, and thereby maintain our naval power and influence abroad; but they will infuse a life and activity into our Home-trade, which will gradually revive and invigorate our Agriculture, in a degree which could not otherwise be attained; and thus will Commerce become again, as it has so frequently proved itself before, the *vis medicatrix* of the State.



**APPENDIX.**





## A

WE were congratulated, annually, during the War, on the *favourable Balance of our Trade* with all the world. The Bullion Committee, in their famous Report in 1810, present the subject in order to show its effects on Exchanges. From this it appears, that in 1809 the *official value* of our exports exceeded that of our imports, to Europe alone, £14,170,758. However, according to *actual value*, it appears by the papers 75 and 76 in their Appendix, that in 1809,

|                                                         |                   |
|---------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| The Exports, to <i>Europe alone</i> , amounted to ..... | £27,109,337       |
| The Imports to .....                                    | 19,821,601        |
| Leaving a Balance in our favour of .....                | <u>£7,368,736</u> |

In the same year the foreign expenses of Government were,

|                                                                                                                                                    |                                    |           |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------|
| Bills drawn on the Treasury (App. 70)                                                                                                              | £4,162,190                         |           |
| Deduct West India bills .....                                                                                                                      | 903,360                            |           |
| Leaving for the European Balance .....                                                                                                             | <u>£3,258,824</u>                  |           |
| Gold and silver exported by the paymaster .....                                                                                                    | 1,540,000                          |           |
| <i>See Appendix 79 (in 1808 it was 3½ millions.)</i>                                                                                               |                                    |           |
| Bills drawn on the Commissary in chief                                                                                                             | £328,767                           |           |
| Ditto .....                                                                                                                                        | Pay office .....                   | 1,793,778 |
| Ditto .....                                                                                                                                        | Victualling office .....           | 897,095   |
| Ditto .....                                                                                                                                        | Navy board .....                   | 672,820   |
| Ditto .....                                                                                                                                        | Transport board .....              | 295,705   |
| Ditto .....                                                                                                                                        | Ordnance board .....               | 212,753   |
| From which a deduction is made by Mr. Bosanquet for services not European, of                                                                      | <u>4,200,918</u><br><u>900,000</u> |           |
| Leaving the European amount of service money ..                                                                                                    | 3,300,918                          |           |
| To which he adds freight paid to neutrals in the }<br>Baltic trade only, "200,000 tons, at the rate of }<br>£20 per ton, two-thirds neutral" ..... | } 2,600,000                        |           |
| Total                                                                                                                                              | <u>£10,699,742</u>                 |           |

Exceeding by 3 millions the Balance of our Trade in 1809:—  
in subsequent periods of the War, the difference has been still more striking.

## B

## FROM THE LONDON GAZETTE.

*Carlton House, Dec. 9, 1816.*

This day, the Right Honourable the Lord Mayor, the Aldermen, Recorder, Sheriffs, Common Council, and Officers of the Corporation of the city of London, waited upon the Prince Regent with the following Address and Petition; which was read by Sir John Silvester, Bart. the Recorder:

To his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, Regent of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland,

The Humble Address and Petition of the Lord Mayor, Aldermen, and Commons of the city of London, in Common Council assembled.

*May it please your Royal Highness,*

WE, His Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Lord Mayor, Aldermen, and Commons of the city of London, in Common Council assembled, humbly approach your Royal Highness to represent our national sufferings and grievances, and respectfully to suggest the adoption of measures which we conceive to be indispensably necessary for the safety, the quiet, and the prosperity of the realm.

We forbear to enter into details of the afflicting scenes of privations and sufferings that every-where exist; the distress and misery, which for so many years have been progressively accumulating, have at length become insupportable; it is no longer partially felt, nor limited to one portion of the empire—the commercial, the manufacturing, and the agricultural interests, are equally sinking under its irresistible pressure; and it has become impossible to find employment for a large mass of the population, much less to bear up against our present enormous burthens.

We beg to impress upon your Royal Highness, that our present complicated evils have not arisen from a mere transition from war to peace, nor from any sudden or accidental causes, neither can they be removed by any partial or temporary expedients.

Our grievances are the natural effect of rash and ruinous wars, unjustly commenced, and pertinaciously persisted in, when no rational object was to be obtained; of immense subsidies to Foreign Powers to defend their own territories, or to commit aggressions on those of their neighbours; of a delusive paper currency; of an unconstitutional and unprecedented military force in time of peace; of the unexampled and increasing magnitude of the Civil List; of the enormous sums paid for unmerited pensions and sinecures; and of a long course of the most lavish and improvident expenditure of the public money throughout every branch of the government; all arising from the corrupt and inadequate state of the representation of the people in Parliament, whereby all constitutional control over the servants of the Crown has been lost, and Parliaments have become subservient to the will of the Ministers.

We cannot forbear expressing our grief and disappointment, that notwithstanding your Royal Highness's gracious recommendation of economy, at the opening of the last Session of Parliament, your Ministers should have been found opposing every proposition for lessening the national expenditure, and that they should have been able to obtain majorities to support and sanction their conduct, in defiance of your Royal Highness's recommendation and the declared sense of the nation; affording another melancholy proof of the corrupt state of the representation, in addition to those facts so often stated and offered to be proved at the bar of the House of Commons, in a petition presented in 1793, by the Hon. Charles now Lord

Grey, whereby it appeared the great body of the people were excluded from all share in the election of Members, and that the majority of the Honourable House were returned by the proprietors of rotten boroughs, the influence of the Treasury, and a few powerful families.

We can, Sir, no longer support, out of our dilapidated resources, an overwhelming load of taxation, and we humbly submit to your Royal Highness, that nothing but a reformation of these abuses, and restoring to the people their just and constitutional right in the election of Members of Parliament, can afford a security against their recurrence, calm the apprehensions of the people, allay their irritated feelings, and prevent those misfortunes in which the nation must inevitably be involved, by an obstinate and infatuated adherence to the present system of corruption and extravagance.

We therefore humbly pray your Royal Highness to assemble Parliament as early as possible, and that you will be graciously pleased to recommend to their immediate consideration these important matters, and the adoption of measures for abolishing all useless places, pensions, and sinecures, for the reduction of our present enormous military establishment, for making every practicable reduction in the public expenditure, and restoring to the people their just share and weight in the Legislature.

Signed by order of the Court,

HENRY WOODTHORPE.

To which Address and Petition His Royal Highness was graciously pleased to return the following Answer :

It is with strong feelings of surprise and regret, that I receive this Address and Petition of the Lord Mayor, Aldermen, and Commons, of the city of London, in Common Council assembled.

Deeply as I deplore the prevailing distress and difficulties of the country, I derive consolation from the persuasion that the great body of His Majesty's subjects, notwithstanding the various attempts which have been made to irritate and mislead them, are well convinced that the severe trials which they sustain with such exemplary patience and fortitude, are chiefly to be attributed to unavoidable causes; and I contemplate with the most cordial satisfaction, the efforts of that enlightened benevolence which is so usefully and laudably exerting itself throughout the kingdom.

I shall resort, with the utmost confidence, to the tried wisdom of Parliament, at the time which, upon the fullest consideration, I have thought most advisable under the present circumstances of the country; and I entertain a perfect conviction, that a firm and temperate administration of the Government, assisted and supported by the good sense, public spirit, and loyalty of the nation, will effectually counteract those proceedings which, from whatever motives they may originate, are calculated to render temporary difficulties the means of producing permanent and irreparable calamity.

## C

It is impossible to compare accurately the extent of our Exports at different and remote periods, in consequence of the irregularity and carelessness with which the returns to Parliament were made formerly. Since the present Inspector General, Mr. Irving, came into office, no pains have been spared to render this branch of the Customs more complete, and the declared values and quantities of commodities have approximated much nearer to their real values and quantities.

The following extracts from the official returns to the House of Commons, will serve however in some degree to show the comparative increase in our trade, previous to and during the war.

## The average Exports of the years

|              | <i>Foreign &amp; Colonial Produce.</i> | <i>British Manufactures.</i> | <i>Total.</i> |
|--------------|----------------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------|
| 1785 } ..... | £4,539,000                             | £11,655,000                  | £16,194,000   |
| 1786 } ..... |                                        |                              |               |
| 1787 } ..... |                                        |                              |               |
| 1795 } ..... | 8,948,000                              | 17,510,000                   | 26,458,000    |
| 1796 } ..... |                                        |                              |               |
| 1797 } ..... |                                        |                              |               |
| 1805 } ..... | 9,995,000                              | 25,003,000                   | 34,953,000    |

but to the above should be added about £5,000,000 sterling annually, for the value of *Irish Exports*, which were not included in these returns.

In 1812, 1814, and 1815, the average Exports from Great Britain and Ireland amounted to £48,104,178. — The returns for 1813 were not rendered, on account of the destruction of the Custom-house in London by fire.

In all the above returns the *declared value* is given, but the *real value* may be one-fourth part more on the average.

Dr. Colquhoun states the following as the general summary of the trade of Great Britain and Ireland in 1810, 1811, and 1812 :

IMPORTS from all parts of the World, into the United Kingdom.

|              | <i>Great Britain.</i> | <i>Ireland.</i> | <i>Total.</i> |
|--------------|-----------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| In 1810 .... | £69,931,429,          | £10,301,338,    | £80,232,767   |
| 1811 ....    | 48,865,186,           | 11,348,055,     | 60,013,241    |
| 1812 ....    | 46,583,696,           | 13,841,180,     | 60,424,876    |

EXPORTS to all parts of the World :

|              | <i>Great Britain.</i> | <i>Ireland.</i> | <i>Total.</i> |
|--------------|-----------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| In 1810 .... | £65,300,431,          | £12,091,625,    | £77,392,056   |
| 1811 ....    | 46,506,393,           | 12,079,619,     | 58,586,012    |
| 1812 ....    | 60,455,314,           | 13,270,288,     | 73,725,602    |

In the years 1805 to 1808 our Imports and Exports did not advance progressively, in consequence of the Americans carrying so large a proportion of the produce of the foreign Colonies to Europe as £8,000,000 to £10,000,000, annually.

~~~~~

RETURN made to the committee of the House of Commons in 1814, of the quantities of Corn, Meal, &c. imported from *foreign parts* in the following years : viz.

	<i>CORN & GRAIN.</i> <i>Quarters.</i>	<i>MEAL & FLOUR.</i> <i>Cwt.</i>	<i>RICE.</i> <i>Cwt.</i>	<i>TOTAL VALUE.</i>
1796	1,570,377	238,132	407,048	£4,487,116
1800	2,037,765	343,870	315,649	8,755,095
1801	2,087,614	1,123,714	310,609	10,149,098
1811	1,553,229	475,978	272,370	7,077,865

D

The following extract from a respectable *Leipzig Journal*, called the *Allgemeine Zeitung*, of the 21st October, shows not only the distressed state of the German and Swiss manufactures of Linen, Cotton, &c. with the little prospect they have of a revival, but also that the principal cause of it is the immense quantity of English Goods which are sold at lower prices than they can afford to sell at.

“ The present autumnal Fair affords new and melancholy proofs of the depression of most of the countries of the European Continent. Seldom, perhaps, was such a mass of goods accumulated in so small a space, and seldom has so much freight and carriage been paid in vain. In the principal streets of the city, all the houses are covered with English firms. Whole families, ascendants, descendants, and collaterals, from the most distant manufacturing towns in England, have established themselves here, as it seems, for a long time, with an economical but complete household; there are single houses where you find six or seven magazines of English goods. The Flemish cloth-manufacturers, whose hopes, since France is shut against them, are entirely fixed on Germany, Russia, and Northern Italy, inundate the market in a similar manner. What is brought from other countries of Europe, (except the French silks, which go their old wonted and unchanging course, by way of Leipzig to the North,) is not to compare with those supplies, however it may be distinguished for intrinsic goodness, particularly the German productions.

“ The Polish Jews, and other great purchasers, will not fail by all kinds of arts, by the meanest offers, and delays in concluding their bargains, to depress the prices still more. The richest countries in Europe—France and Austria, by the internal sufficiency of their productions, and by wise prohibitory laws, depend upon themselves; and as the rest of

Europe is still bleeding with the honourable wounds received in the war, but now ended, there can be no brisk demand except from Russia and North America, for the immense overplus of European manufactures, produced by the excess of speculation and machinery. The prospects for the first and most ancient manufacture in Germany, that of Linen, are the most gloomy of all, while the American market is shut against it, by the increasing use of Cottons for apparel and furniture, and by the importation of Irish linen. The manner in which the English white goods are thrown away in Germany, tempts people to supply the deficiencies of wardrobes with calicoes instead of linens. The superficial spirit of the times overlooks the little durability of the article, where, as has been proved in this Fair, the effect of a fine shirt can be produced for 20 good Saxon groschen, (about three shillings.) If we consider the moral influence of the linen manufacture in our German household economy, we shall, without mentioning the injury to agriculture, &c. hardly want any other arguments against the above destructive system.

“The author laments that so many Germans engage in this trade to the ruin of the German industry, but which grows less and less profitable, on account of the continually fresh supplies of goods, each cheaper than the preceding, notwithstanding the consoling hope that the over-bent bow must soon break; yet on the whole, the sale of our home manufactures stagnates.

“The Saxon, &c. Manufacturers leave the Fair with the resolution of limiting their activity. The number of the distressed increases every moment beyond all belief; and in order wholly to destroy the defence of wholesome laws against this hostile invasion, we must find in all public prints the chimera of the freedom of commerce defended, and the order of nature, which places first agriculture, then manufactures,

and lastly commerce, so reversed by the theories of the day, that the interest of commerce is put above all the rest, manufactures subordinate to this, and agriculture to both; which last must be contented with the degree of liberty that the first chooses to allow it. It is clear that the German manufactures, which have been able to maintain themselves in such an inundation, and even to gain a superiority over those of foreign countries, have secured it for a long time.

“ In coloured printed chintzes and cottons, the English have been forced to yield, for the three last Fairs, to those of France, Switzerland, and the Banks of the Rhine.

“ The impression which has been universally made by the painting (not printing) of the cottons of Kosmanos, and the perfection of the forms and colours in the calicoes of this manufactory, show that we begin in private life also to throw off the tyranny of uniform fashions and patterns, on which the dominion of the English machines is founded.”

The article concludes with enforcing the necessity of laws in support of the German manufacturers, and lamenting that the *phantom of freedom of trade* should be supported by German merchants and writers.

The above account may serve likewise to illustrate the observations contained in page 40, respecting the manner in which our Manufacturers became foreign Traders; instead of keeping their Goods in their warehouses at home, to wait the demand of the foreign Consumer, or the Merchant in London, Liverpool, &c. they supplied the great markets of Europe and America themselves, with the view of realizing the profits both of the Manufacturer and the Merchant.

E

A Report of the state of the Cotton-works at Belper and Millford, in the Parish of Duffield, in the county of Derby, as it respects the Health, Instruction, and Morals of the Persons employed therein, from 1st of January, 1815, to the 1st of January, 1816.

Number of persons employed (all natives)	1494
Under the age of ten years	100
<i>(None meant to be admitted under the age of nine years.)</i>	
The number of days these have lost by sickness	50
<i>(Or each person six hours in the year on an average.)</i>	
The number who have made proficiency in reading ...	92
Unable to read	8
Average weekly earnings	2s 6d
<hr/>	
Above 10 and under 18 years of age	612
<i>(No apprentices, except as makers of machinery, and they reside with their parents, and receive weekly wages.)</i>	
The number of days these have lost by sickness	619
<i>(Or each person 12½ hours in the year on an average.)</i>	
Number who have made proficiency in reading	603
Unable to read	8
<i>(Four of these incapable of being taught.)</i>	

The average size of the rooms in which they are employed, is from 100 to 150 feet long, 30 feet wide, and 9 feet high: and the average number of cubic feet of space for each person is 11,04.

Pure air (warmed when necessary) is transmitted into every room constantly, at the rate of 150 gallons per minute, for each person.

The working hours are twelve;—six before dinner, (which is from 12 to 1) and six after; each of which six hours include the time for breakfast and tea.—This has been the invariable

practice at the original Silk-mill at Derby, in this neighbourhood, for more than a hundred years past.

The complexion and general appearance of the persons employed here, are those of persons chiefly employed in the open air; without any of that paleness which generally accompanies sedentary employments at home.

Instruction, &c. by the Proprietors.

Children at Day-schools	64
Ditto at Sunday-schools	650

Lancasterian schools for 500 are nearly ready, and after they are opened, it is intended by the proprietors, that the being able to read shall be a condition of admittance to employment at the works.

By other Inhabitants of the Township.

Children at Day-schools,	700
Ditto at Sunday-schools.	700

Before the establishment of these works, the people were remarkable for vice and immorality; and numbers of the children were chiefly maintained by begging through the neighbourhood.—Now, their industry, decorous behaviour, attendance on public worship, and general good conduct, compared with the neighbouring villages, where no manufactures are established, is remarkably conspicuous.



It is gratifying to see how much the evil influence of manufactures, upon the morals and happiness of the labouring poor, may be diminished by the constant attention of the masters. In this instance, indeed, it is evident the introduction of the Cotton-works has been a great blessing to the country around: the distinguished talents and virtues of the proprietors have

made them so. In other establishments of the same kind, though the same degree of good may not be accomplished, much may be done, especially in situations of a retired kind, such as are often chosen for the convenience of waterfalls, &c. where a population is collected by the proprietor of a manufactory, which he must support in sickness, if he does not promote its healthy condition by wise arrangements. In such places, the necessary intercourse between the master and the workman creates a reciprocal dependence, and this furnishes both the inducement and the means of consulting the well-being of the poor. But in large towns the case is very different; where it is easy to find a succession of workmen, and the inefficient hands can be abandoned to the care of others, the masters are too apt to neglect those plans which they ought to adopt, for promoting sobriety, prudence, and good conduct.

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The Wages paid at Blackburn, in the following years, for weaving 74 printing Calicoes, in the month of April each year.

	<i>s</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>s</i>	<i>d</i>		<i>s</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>s</i>	<i>d</i>				
1792	...	8	0	...	55	0	1804	...	7	6	...	69	6
1793	...	6	0	...	55	8	1805	...	8	6	...	88	0
1794	...	6	0	...	52	0	1806	...	7	6	...	83	0
1795	...	7	0	...	81	6	1807	...	7	6	...	78	0
1796	...	7	0	...	80	2	1808	...	5	6	...	79	0
1797	...	7	6	...	62	0	1809	...	6	6	...	106	0
1798	...	7	0	...	54	0	1810	...	8	6	...	112	0
1799	...	7	0	...	75	0	1811	...	5	6	...	108	0
1800	...	8	0	...	127	0	1812	...	6	6	...	128	0
1801	...	8	0	...	128	6	1813	...	8	0	...	120	0
1802	...	10	0	...	67	4	1814	...	10	0	...	70	0
1803	...	9	0	...	60	0							

Average price of *Wheat* $\frac{1}{4}$ quarter in the *Windsor Market*.

Average price of *Wheat* $\frac{1}{4}$ quarter in the *Windsor Market*.

Mr. Milne “ considered that when Grain and other provisions rose, both manufacturing and agricultural labour fell, and *vice versa*; for this obvious reason, that the workmen do more work, and of course, as there is only a certain demand for labour, the value of the labour falls. He always observed the prices of labour were governed by demand and supply, like any other commodity, and not by the price of Grain.”

He remarks, “ that the price of Corn has an effect on the price of labour; so has the price of shoes and of cloth, but it does not appear to him the price of labour is governed entirely by it.”

The following were the current Wages paid in the neighbourhood of Manchester for weaving muslins; and may be considered in general as much as a good workman could obtain for a *week's labour*: viz.

Year.	Wages in July.		Average Price of Wheat in the Gazette.		Wages in December.		Average Price of Wheat in the Gazette.	
1810	18s 0d	....	112s 0d	....	16s 0d	....	95s 0d
1811	13 6	....	85 0	....	12 6	....	103 0
1812	13 6	....	140 0	....	12 0	....	120 0
1813	14 6	....	75 0	....	13 0	....	68 0
1814	17 0	....	67 6	....	15 0	....	71 0
1815	..	16 0	....	68 0	....	14 0	....	58 0
1816	8 6	....	74 0	....	7 6	....	104 0

It may be observed, that the wages are generally lower in the Winter than in the Spring and Summer.—The advance in 1814 and 1815, when Corn was very low, and the low rates at which they have continued the last six months, whilst the price of Corn has been rising, are strongly corroborative of the argument in the text, that the connexion between the prices of labour and Corn is scarcely to be traced.

It must, however, be admitted, that in England parochial relief amalgamates itself with wages in such a way, as to render the inquiry very difficult; and it seems probable that the Poor-laws prevent the fluctuations in the prices of provisions from producing as great an effect as they might otherwise do on the rate of wages, especially at a period like the present, when a portion so much larger than formerly of the great body of workmen in manufactures, have conquered their repugnance to receiving parish allowance.

FINIS.

J. & J. Smith, Printers, Liverpool.

