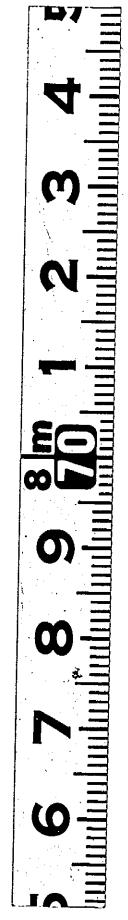


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CONSIDERATIONS
ON THE
EXORBITANT PRICE
OF
PROVISIONS.
[Price TWO SHILLINGS.]

CONSIDERATIONS
ON THE
EXORBITANT PRICE
OF
PROVISIONS.

SETTING FORTH

The pernicious Effects which a REAL Scarcity
of the Necessaries of Life must eventually
have upon the COMMERCE, POPULATION,
and POWER, of GREAT BRITAIN.

To which is added,

A PLAN to remove the Cause of our present
NATIONAL DISTRESS.

Humbly submitted to the candid and impartial
PUBLIC.

BY FRANCIS MOORE.

L O N D O N:

Printed for T. CADELL, Bookseller, opposite Catharine-street,
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the Royal Exchange.

MDCCLXXIII.

TO THE
R E A D E R.

*THE Scarcity of Provisions for
some years past having seriously
engaged the attention of the Public,
I presumed to deliver my sentiments
on the subject, in five Letters thro'
the channel of the News-Papers.*

*The favourable reception with
which those Letters were honoured,
and the confirmation which my ar-
guments have since received from
melancholy experience, induced me
to*

To the READER.

*to a further investigation of the
subject.*

*The five Letters before mentioned,
are prefixed as a necessary intro-
duction to this work, and will not, I
flatter myself, prove disagreeable.*

*Cheapside,
Jan. 8, 1773.*

F. M.

CONSIDERATIONS

UPON THE

EXORBITANT PRICE

OF

PROVISIONS, &c.

LETTER I.

THE exorbitant price of provisions has frequently employed the pens of many sensible men; and though the combinations of Farmers, Graziers, Salesmen, Butchers, and various other Dealers in the several necessary articles of food, are generally mentioned as the causes of this effect, I am fully persuaded the true source of this evil has hitherto escaped the public observation.

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As a well-wisher to the Community, therefore, I shall beg leave to deliver my sentiments, and I trust that the Reader's candour, when he considers that the Author of this Letter is a Man of Business, will excuse any defects which may be discovered in his manner of treating the subject, from a kind consideration of the design.

It is a fact well established, (however generally the Dealers in Provisions may be charged with a spirit of monopolizing) that monopolies are chiefly made in those articles which are of a nature the least perishable. I will not deny that the Farmer, Grazier, Salesman, or Butcher, may have a strong inclination *to make the most of his commodity*; but at the same time I must observe, that this *inclination* is very natural; it is the known principle of every trade; and if we turn to the superior walks of life, from what spring shall we trace the immense rise of estates, but from that great solicitude for self, which induces the Right Honourable Land-holder, like the Salesman in Smithfield, *to make the most of his commodity*.

YET while I urge this excusatory argument for the Dealers in Provisions, I may safely affirm likewise, in their defence, that it never can be their

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their interest *long* to with-hold their respective articles from the markets, because they are of a perishable nature, and hoarding them up against a precarious day of scarcity, is incurring a *certain* expence for a profit altogether *uncertain*.

If we speak of sheep, or black cattle, from the moment they are fit for slaughter, the Grazier is evidently a loser by keeping them on his lands. He not only runs the risque of their dying, but also bears the charge of their fodder, and therefore common policy obliges him to dispose of them as fast as possible. Whatever middle man between the Breeder and Consumer with-holds live stock from the market, runs the same risque, and incurs the same expence. I know it will be urged, that this risque, and this expence, ultimately center with the public; that these persons find their account in buying up all they can, and in feeding the markets accordingly.

THIS is the grand argument which is continually thrown out against Forestallers and Monopolizers, and as things are at present circumstanced, the wealthy, who trade in such articles may, perhaps, as they do likewise in every article of commerce, somewhat increase the price

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to the Consumers. But with all deference to the opinions of those Gentlemen who have bestowed their thoughts upon this national grievance, I am induced, from a thorough conviction of the reality, to point out what appears to me to be the true source of the exorbitant rise of every kind of provisions, and therefore I hope I shall be excused when I say, *It is not because Engrossers detain the essentials of life from market, but because the country does not afford a sufficient supply.*

GIVE me leave, in support of what I have advanced, to observe, that if fresh quantities of provisions, adequate to the daily consumption, were to be poured in from the different parts of the country, ingrossing would not only be a precarious, but a losing trade; and the certainty of loss, in withholding provisions, is the only security for their being brought regularly to market; therefore I hope to be credited, when I assert, that it is the scarcity of provisions which enhances their value, and, till a plenty is produced, a reduction of the rates will be utterly impracticable.

In order fully to illustrate this subject, as well as to point out the means of removing so alarming an evil, give me leave to inform the Reader,
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that *nearly half* the produce of this kingdom is consumed by horses, instead of being appropriated to the sustenance of more profitable animals, or the mitigation of human distress. Within the Bills of Mortality (only) near fifteen thousand quarters of oats are expended weekly, besides beans and hay. Can we then wonder that provisions are dear? The land that produces a crop of corn for horses cannot at the same time furnish pasture for sheep, furnish barley for beer, or wheat for bread. What then must the consequence be? what the consequence fatally is, discontent in the middling ranks of life, in the lower absolute misery. Whereas, if the immense tracts of fine country, now devoted to the use of horses, were more advantageously employed, the gloom would immediately disappear, and a face of universal satisfaction once more appear in the Community.

Two things may possibly be observed with respect to this reasoning, to which it will be proper to reply. First, it may be said, that oxen, cows, and sheep, consume the produce of the earth as well as horses. And secondly, that the breed of horses is *absolutely* requisite for the necessary business of the kingdom. Neither of these positions, however, when candidly considered, affect my argument. With respect
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to the former, we cannot say, that oxen, cows, or sheep, consume any thing unprofitably, because they give abundantly more than they receive. The ox gives us his labour, the cow gives us milk, affords us butter and cheese, and the sheep yields us a fleece yearly, that furnishes employment and covering to millions. Nor does the value of these animals terminate with their existence; they are benefactors after death, and in beef, mutton, tallow, suet, and hides, they feed, light, and chiefly clothe the Public. Can this be said of a horse? By no means.—*He* presents us, all-admired as he is, with nothing but his labour; he must be maintained three or four years before this labour can be expected; and when he dies, his worth dies with him, for he will then scarcely bring five shillings for the hounds.

Now let us take a view of the expence of supporting these different animals. It is well known that a horse, when at grass, is reckoned equal in his consumption to two oxen or cows, or ten sheep; to say nothing of oats or beans. So that in every respect he must be considered, wherever his service *can* be spared, as the most useless animal we breed. Gentlemen who keep horses must be sensible I under-rate their consumption,

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sumption, if I confine the food of each to the produce of four acres annually.

LET us suppose, for instance, that every acre of land through the kingdom yields, yearly, a load and a quarter, that is forty-five trusses of hay; or, if sown with oats, that it furnishes four quarters and an half, that is thirty-six bushels; which is the very uttermost. Now, if one truss of hay will *poorly* serve a horse three days, near two acres and three quarters are required for his subsistence yearly. And if one bushel of oats, in the same manner, is a *poor* weekly allowance for a horse, near an acre and an half will be inadequate to his provision in this article for a year.

UPON this calculation, which is much underrated, I would wish to claim the Reader's attention, and when all the various disadvantages resulting from our partiality for horses are weighed, it will naturally lead us to an examination of the second point, *Whether the present breed of horses is ABSOLUTELY requisite for the necessary business of the kingdom.*

FORMERLY our Farmers ploughed and worked their teams *chiefly* with oxen, and the oxen were rendered the better for their labour. But now, from

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from a species of extravagant luxury, which has insensibly crept in amongst us, the ox is suffered to remain idle in the field, and our farmers vie with each other in the expensive parade of horses, for which, in numerous branches of husbandry, there cannot be the least necessity. Thus the useful ox is left wholly unemployed, while the costly horse is purchased and kept at a great expence, because he looks more *gracefully* under a cart load of dung, or in some other homely occupation of husbandry.

WOULD the Farmer reflect but for a moment upon his real interest, he would not despise the useful ox, but he would discard all superfluous horses, and apply the produce of the land, at present confined to their support, towards paying the rent of his farm.

I HAVE the satisfaction of telling him, likewise, that by means of my plough, he may considerably reduce the number either of his horses or his oxen, which he is now under the necessity of keeping for the cultivation of his lands. And I hope also, that I may be allowed to say, that the improvements which I have pointed out with respect to the construction of wheel-carriages, will greatly reduce the number of horses employed in our streets, and on our roads. To
lessen

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lessen the number of these horses, will be the removing of so many enormous locusts from the land; and, exclusive of the expence of keeping horses, and the risque of their dying, the very land at present required for their use may be appropriated to produce *necessaries* for the support of the People. From pursuing these hints, I doubt not, that in a few years, the other great benefit I always had in view, *the lowering the price of provisions*, will necessarily follow.

I AM sensible, that prejudices are not easily removed, and that the prevailing fashion for horses will not immediately be set aside: thus we may perchance, for a time, refuse the means of plenty, with which Providence has graciously blessed us. I shall therefore, perhaps, at present, in vain tell the gay, luxurious, and inconsiderate; in vain tell the laborious; and even in vain tell humanity itself, that the poor will be fed by reducing the number of horses. Let me, however, judge respectfully of the national good sense of the national benignity; let me hope, that reflection will will soon take place, that happiness will be preferred

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ferred to parade, and that the desire of seeming to be rich, will not lead us into real poverty.

Sept. 19, 1771.

L E T T E R II.

IN September last I communicated my sentiments to the Public on the Dearness of PROVISIONS, and endeavoured to prove that a real scarcity, arising from the unnecessary breed of horses, was the principal cause of so heavy a misfortune. To support the truth of my assertion, I shall now take a comparative view for forty years back, of all the Black Cattle and Sheep brought to Smithfield Market; from which the Reader will see at one glance, that however the buildings in the metropolis have increased, no material increase has taken place in the consumption of Butchers Meat.

IN

IN justice to a Gentleman equally known to the world for his integrity, and his benevolence, I must acknowledge that the following table is not my own; but I have a pride in confessing myself obliged to so eminent a character, and am the more emboldened with information indisputably authentic, to labour, at least, to promote the general purposes of humanity.

C 2 A TABLE,

A T A B L E,
Shewing the Numbers of SHEEP and BLACK CATTLE
brought to Smithfield Market for the last Forty Years.

<i>From Michaelmas 1730, to Ditto</i>	SHEEP.	Aver- age.	BLACK CATT.	Aver- age.		
1731	480010	568060	88304	93655		
2	537250		87571			
3	588310		95301			
4	597990		94473			
5	636740	599466	102628	97548		
6	617720		100602			
7	637190		100686			
8	615000		96762			
9	598000	531134	96404	85892		
40	527420		93285			
1741	555480		85245			
2	518700		86913			
3	479030	655516	85682	80878		
4	513320		87441			
5	589140		84179			
6	648350		83149			
7	646930	680618	81988	80843		
8	634750		76060			
9	666900		83357			
50	680650		79836			
1751	673650	616750	79983	91699		
2	688970		81847			
3	686810		83677			
4	669090		77605			
5	684570	842080	81106	121175		
6	653220		83266			
7	594260		89776			
8	571660		90559			
9	610870	1Yr. & $\frac{1}{4}$	96082	1Yr. & $\frac{1}{4}$		
60	653740		98813			
1761	718060		842030		90232	121175
<i>To Christm.</i> 2	842030		635247		121175	86555
3	964390	90991				
4	581440	80299				
5	547300	84703				
6	587520	4Years.	78387	84244		
7	588730		81035			
8	655920		84855			
9	665240		85862			
1770	666650	632812	90979			

FROM

FROM the foregoing table it appears, that the decrease in the sale of black cattle is about equal to the increase in the sale of sheep, according to the proportion which they bear to each other in point of weight; therefore it is evident, that the consumption of these articles of food is now nearly the same as it was forty years ago, which makes us naturally ask, how this can correspond with the general outcry, that the metropolis requires such extraordinary quantities of provisions as advance the price on one hand, while Fore-stalling and Engrossing advance it on the other, to the unspeakable distress of the Community.

THOSE who have maintained these two positions, may perceive their mistake by the table in the first instance, and in respect to the second, it is manifest, that if the country produced a plenty, this plenty must be brought to market; unless we absurdly suppose, that the Dealers in Provisions are wicked merely for the sake of wickedness, and destroy one part of their property to raise the other part on its unavoidable purchasers. But if we more rationally conclude, that Farmers, Graziers, and the various Dealers in Provisions do not make such a wicked destruction of the fruits of the earth, what becomes of the
amazing

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amazing number of sheep, oxen, hogs, and poultry, and the immense quantity of corn, butter, and cheese that they have withheld from market (according to the general opinion of the mistaken multitude) for the last fifteen or twenty years? Surely in such a space of time these hoards must have been discovered somewhere, or they *must* have been brought to market, where they would have produced a natural effect by falling the price. For I am certain, that the value of a commodity is governed by the quantity on sale, consequently the more live stock we bring to Smithfield, the lower must be the rate of Butchers Meat.

THE with-holding cattle from market, or taking them away unfold, is so apparently hazardous to the owners, that they will seldom attempt either; for in the first place, the longer they are detained in the country, after they have been properly fed, the longer the Grazier lies out of his money, besides the expence of keeping them; and what is still more material, he runs all the various hazards attendant upon accident and mortality. In the second place, let us suppose that he stops them a little short of the market, or takes them away from it in expectation of a better price, can we imagine that the worse they
grow

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grow the more profitably they will sell, or that the owner will keep them near town three or four days at a certain expence, without even a probability of any advantage?

AFTER cattle have been driven from fifty to one hundred and fifty miles, and on the road have been miserably supplied even with food, to which they are unaccustomed; after they have been made as fat as possible, and then turned out to a long journey, when least able to endure the fatigue; after they have been cruelly beaten, and in general lamed in their progress to the capital, and thrown into a state which must speedily reduce them, especially if they are off their feed, which is frequently the case; I say, after all these disadvantages are considered, is it credible that any man in his senses would keep such a stock willingly upon his hands? No.

THE very avarice imputed to the owner must induce him to dispose of *live stock* instantly, and render him utterly disinclined to trifle much about terms with a purchaser. In every point of view, therefore, provisions being of a perishable nature, it is, generally speaking, impossible to create an artificial scarcity, except for a very short time: and if the spring of a real scarcity should be fortunately traced, it becomes
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the duty of every good subject to exert himself in cutting it off.

MANY writers have found great fault with the present mode of collecting live stock, and bringing them to market by jobbers; they have also found fault with Salesmen and Carcase-Butchers; but in opposition to these casuists I must declare that I look upon the persons thus censured as very essentially serviceable to the Public; for instance, the stock of Graziers or Farmers cannot all become fat at the same time, but when any part is so, the sooner that part is disposed of the better; therefore the jobbers or drovers either buy or drive such stock as are fit for sale to the market, where the Salesman has but the small commission of one shilling and sixpence per bullock, or three-pence per sheep, for his trouble in disposing of them to the Carcase or Cutting-Butcher, and if the latter has not the conveniences for slaughtering, he may have a bullock slaughtered for four shillings, and the whole of his produce fairly accounted for. This expence surely cannot materially enhance the price to the consumers.

A GENTLEMAN of my acquaintance, who keeps part of his estate in his own hands in the county of Suffolk, one hundred miles from
London,

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London, informs me that his black cattle are driven from his own grounds to Smithfield Market, and there sold, for which he pays only five shillings *per* head, including the whole of their keep and turnpikes. Can live stock be conveyed from the breeder to the consumer at a less expence? Surely no.

WHAT would be the consequence if Graziers were obliged to bring their cattle to Smithfield Market themselves, in small numbers, and that the public were compelled to make them satisfaction for their expences and loss of time? *It is too evident to need a reply.* Besides, the very persons just before complained of, seem as subject to misfortunes as other men, and in general appear to meet with equal difficulties in procuring a livelihood. For these reasons, and many more which might be urged, it appears to me that the dearness of provisions is owing to a real scarcity; and therefore, until a greater plenty of the necessaries of life shall be produced, or until the present produce be applied much more towards the support of the people, and much less towards the maintenance of unnecessary horses, a reduction of the prices will remain absolutely impossible.

March 4, 1772.

D LETTER

LETTER III.

IN my two former letters I endeavoured to prove that the present extravagant prices of provisions were owing to a real scarcity, which, if permitted to continue, must inevitably ruin this country.

In order to elucidate the subject of our enquiry, let us take a comparative view of the metropolis at this time, and for forty years past: it is the general opinion that the inhabitants of London and Westminster are amazingly increased; but this does not appear from the following table of births and burials within the Bills of Mortality for the last forty years:

THE TABLE.

<i>From Christmas 1730, to Ditto</i>	Births.	<i>Aver- age.</i>	Burials.	<i>Aver- age.</i>
1731	17830	17517	25262	25486
2	17788		23338	
3	17465		29233	
4	17630		26062	
5	16873		23538	
6	16491	16164	27581	27494
7	16760		27823	
8	16060		25825	
9	16281		25432	
40	15231		30811	
1741	14957	14419	32169	25270
2	13751		27483	
3	15050		25200	
4	14261		20206	
5	14078		21296	
6	14577	14496	28157	25232
7	14942		25494	
8	14153		23269	
9	14260		25516	
50	14548		23727	
1751	14691	15119	21028	23080
2	15308		20485	
3	15443		29276	
4	14947		22696	
5	15209		21917	
6	14830	14459	20872	19839
7	14053		21313	
8	14209		17576	
9	14253		19604	
60	14951		19830	
1761	16000	15886	21063	23798
2	15351		26326	
3	15133		26143	
4	16374		22230	
5	16574		23230	
6	16257	16422	23911	22888
7	15980		22612	
8	16042		23639	
9	16724		21847	
1770	17109		22434	

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NOTWITHSTANDING the above table, there may be an increase of people in London and its environs, but by no means in that proportion which is generally imagined, nor equal to the extent of buildings which present themselves on all sides round. It must, indeed, be granted, that the widening our streets, the removing the gates, the new pavements, and various other improvements which have within these few years taken place in this city, to the honour of its Magistrates, must undoubtedly contribute to render the capital itself much more wholesome, and consequently to prolong the lives of its inhabitants in general. But when we consider that our modern houses cover much more ground than our ancestors required for their habitations, the stupendous piles of buildings are rather an argument of luxury, than an increase of the people.

I ADMIT that the great number of country houses, which are out of the Bills of Mortality, take off something from the births and burials, but they make not the least difference respecting Butchers Meat, as Smithfield Market supplies the country for many miles, even as far as Ware, Kingston, and Gravesend.

IF, however, we grant that the inhabitants in and near London are increased, the consumption

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tion of animal food is, nevertheless, nearly the same as it was forty years ago, which appears from the table of sheep and black cattle brought to Smithfield Market, as set forth in my last letter; and this, surely, is a further manifestation of the scarcity which I have asserted.

IT must also be acknowledged, that there are more inhabitants at this time in some of our principal manufacturing towns than there were formerly; but all this bears no proportion to the decrease of people throughout the country in general, for our villages are amazingly depopulated, to the great detriment of the State, by lessening the revenue, and weakening the strength of the kingdom.

IT appears from a tract, which I am well assured was published under the immediate auspices of Mr. George Grenville, that the number of houses in England and Wales were reduced from one thousand seven hundred and fifty-nine to sixty-six, no less than five thousand seven hundred and ninety, notwithstanding all the new buildings of the metropolis and elsewhere. Dr. Price, moreover, in a late publication says, that the depopulation is so great "as to have reduced the number of inhabitants in England
" and

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“and Wales near A QUARTER *in eighty years,*
 “or from about six millions to four millions
 “and a half.”

THESE calculations I am fearful are too true; one instance of depopulation, out of numbers that might be given, at this instant occurs to my memory. In passing through a village near Swaffham, in the county of Norfolk, a few years ago, to my great mortification I beheld the houses tumbling into ruins, and the common fields all inclosed: upon enquiring into the cause of this melancholy alteration, I was informed that a Gentleman of Lynn had bought that township and the next adjoining to it; that he had thrown the one into three, and the other into four farms, which, before the inclosure, were in about twenty farms: and upon my further enquiring what was become of the farmers who were turned out, the answer was, that some of them were dead, and the rest were become labourers. *Need we search further for the deserted village?*

BUT to return to my argument: the people of this island being evidently reduced in number, is it not reasonable to suppose that there should be an equal reduction in the consumption of provisions? Consequently the price of eatables,

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bles, at present, ought to be lower than they were formerly; and certainly would be so, if the produce of the same portion of land had still been allotted towards the support of the people; more especially, as it is well known, that by our improvements in agriculture, the fruits of the earth are become in general more abundant than ever.

I KNOW this manner of reasoning will be objected to by many persons, who maintain that the rise of provisions is unavoidable, from the plenty of money at this time in the nation; but this is a mistaken opinion, which I will endeavour to demonstrate upon some future occasion.

I SHALL conclude this letter by observing, that the price of provisions is of such importance, that it is impossible to give it too much attention. I will venture to say, that the very existence of this monarchy depends upon it; for as the price of labour must always bear a proportion to the price of provisions, a growing scarcity must naturally affect our manufactures. I am well aware that it will be urged (as it frequently has been) that when provisions are dear, there is an increase in the quantity of goods manufactured. This, in part, I grant to be
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the case, as the industrious poor are then compelled to exert themselves with extraordinary assiduity to support their families; but when they see no prospect of relief, and are in distress for the common necessaries of life, they murmur, they complain, and in time (provided the price of their labour is not advanced) they either emigrate to our settlements abroad, or become desperate at home; and the alarming outrages, from the various mobs we have recently had, would probably, without redress, have ended in a civil war.

If then we enhance the price of our labour, we of course enhance the price of our merchandize; and this will cause us not only to be shut out of foreign markets, but to be rivalled in our colonies, to the inevitable ruin of our commerce, from whence we derive the strength of our NAVY, *the bulwark and great palladium of the British empire.* Let those who boast of freedom, or affect to love this land of liberty, weigh these matters well, and consider their unavoidable consequences.

March 21, 1772.

LETTER

LETTER IV.

IN my last I promised, upon some future occasion, to *attempt*, at least, to demonstrate, that the opinion of those persons is very erroneous, who maintain that the present high price of provisions is unavoidable, from the plenty of money at this time in the kingdom.

To fulfil this promise shall be the chief business of the present letter; and, in order to elucidate the point more clearly, I must ask the reader's permission to make a few preliminary observations. A speculative mind, desirous of seeing how far money and commerce affect each other, need only recollect those early periods in the *history* of nations, when all traffick was carried on by barter, and when the *quantity* as well as the *quality* of every commodity was estimated by conjecture, according to the *immediate wants* of the people.

THE introduction of weights and measures has long since rendered the *quantity* of every article *certain*; but the *quality* still depends, and ever must depend, upon judgment. A certain medium, however, was wanting, to shew the proportionable value between one article and another,

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ther, and money was adopted for that purpose as an agent to facilitate our commercial exchanges, and was therefore constituted a kind of universal STAPLE from universal necessity.

MONEY then may justly be considered as a grand *weight* fixed to one end of the universal scale-beam of trade and commerce, to prove the *relative* worth of all commodities, at a given time, not *partially*, but according to the *general wants* of mankind. And as it is well known, that every article is subject to frequent fluctuations, we may as well undertake to discover their value without money, or some other substituted standard, as to ascertain the weight of the atmosphere without the assistance of a barometer.

HAVING premised thus much, I shall now proceed more immediately to the point in question, and observe, that we gather the fruits of the earth at autumn, when a plenty or scarcity determines their value. At this season also our sheep and black cattle are, generally speaking, more fit for slaughter than at any other time of the year, and therefore they are likewise sold cheaper in the autumn.—Surely this cheapness can never be the effect of money!—We must suppose, that there is as much money in

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in the nation in the month of March as in October.—Why then should not the plenty of it make provisions as dear at one time as at another?

MONEY cannot be supposed to be a bird of passage, which visits this climate only at Michaelmas. An idea of such a nature would be ridiculous, and can never take place in a sober imagination.

THE other day there was a full market of sheep at Smithfield, and but a very thin one of neat cattle; in consequence of which the price of the former was reduced more than a farthing *per* pound; nevertheless, the price of the latter was as much advanced.—Was this, think you, occasioned by the plenty of money? or was it effected by Monopolizers, Forefallers, Salesmen, or Carcase-Butchers?—Those who suppose it to be produced by one, or by all these causes combined, will do well to publish their reasons for such a belief, and account for this striking disparity. In my humble opinion, however, it evidently proceeded from a temporary plenty of sheep, and a scarcity of neat cattle.

I MUST again observe, that there is a fixed time when the fruits of the earth *must* be gathered,

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ed, and there is a fixed time likewise when cattle arrive at their highest perfection.—Then is the proper season for bringing both the one and the other to market, when the price will be necessarily determined, by the *demand* and the *quantity*. This being evidently the case, it is reasonable to suppose that Farmers and Graziers carry their stock to market as soon as they possibly can, unless they expect to be benefited by a future scarcity; because keeping their live stock is attended with many hazards, which I have pointed out in my former letters, and hoarding up their dead stock is to lose the interest of their money; and, what is most material, to diminish the value of perishable articles.

I do not deny but that some substantial Farmers have amassed great wealth by *with holding* their corn from market for one or two years; but from what motive did this conduct proceed? From their expectations of a scarcity, *surely*. And no other cause can, *for a continuance*, enhance the price of provisions; for if a plentiful year succeeds, these hoarders of *grain* will inevitably be the losers; and so will all those persons who speculate in articles which are perishable.

BUT

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BUT to bring the argument more home to the design of this letter, if the Bank was exhausted of its treasure, if the mint was become like a dry fountain, and there was not a single guinea to be seen in Great Britain, would any, or either, or all of these misfortunes produce a plenty? Can you make bread without corn? can you feed the poor without provisions? Mistake not the cause—though MONEY, like a weight, shews the value of a commodity, a plenty, or a scarcity, determines the STANDARD PRICE.

WE may, indeed, turn things out of their natural channel, and by taking only a superficial view, imagine, with a mistaken benevolence, that we can supply the poor with food in greater abundance*. Yet how is this to be done without furnishing a blade of grass, a grain of corn, a single sheep, or a bullock extraordinary? To increase *the consumption* of provisions without even attempting to increase the *quantity*, is the way to aggravate, not to remove, the weight of a public calamity. We may, indeed, exhaust the country of its rising stock;

* The Association at the *Chapter Coffee-House* was a laudable institution to endeavour to lower the Price of Provisions, but experience very soon convinced the Subscribers, that a REAL SCARCITY was the true cause of the present exorbitant price of the necessaries of life.

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we may pluck the fruit from the tree before it is ripe; and, to speak in the language of a homely proverb, "we may eat the chickens before they are hatched." But will this produce plenty? By no means. It will accumulate our distresses.

LET us, therefore, reflect a moment, and instead of doing mischief through a principle of mistaken humanity, let us labour to do good. By turning our thoughts to the sea, and encouraging our fisheries, we shall manifestly give bread and employment to thousands, and materially add to the strength of the kingdom. The ocean presents us with an inexhaustible supply, which, if properly attended to, will inevitably lessen the consumption of the produce of our land, and essentially contribute towards reducing the price of provisions; an advantage that can never arise from any imaginary alteration in the value of money.

April 3, 1772.

L E T T E R V.

PERMIT me to make a few general remarks upon what has been urged in my former letters.

I HAVE

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I HAVE heretofore endeavoured to prove, that the advanced price of provisions cannot be occasioned by the consumption which is made by the people, because there evidently appears to be a fatal decrease in our population.

I HAVE also attempted to shew, that it could neither arise from the artifices of the interested, nor from the supposed plenty of money in the kingdom.

HAVING thus combated the general, though mistaken opinions, and demonstrated, that the scarcity does not originate from such causes, it is now incumbent upon me more particularly to point out from whence it does.

THIS obliges me to return to the subject of my first letter, and again to bewail our fatal prejudice for horses—*which appears to me to be grand source of the present alarming evil.*

WHEN we were threatened with a Spanish invasion in the year 1588, the Ministers of our glorious Elizabeth, ordered a general survey of horses throughout the kingdom, and found only fifty thousand fit for service. In the year 1745, when the rebels were at Derby, no more than twenty thousand horses, upon a like survey, could

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could be found in London, Westminster, and Southwark.

Now by the revenue arising from the wheel-tax, we shall immediately see how amazingly the breed has increased in the short space of twenty-five years.

WE shall likewise trace the progress of luxury, in the article of carriages, beyond a possibility of contradiction.

THE tax of twenty shillings *per* wheel was laid to pay the interest of four *per cent.* on a loan of one million. The first year it produced forty-four thousand pounds, since which it has increased so rapidly, *with the spirit of luxury*, as to amount in the year 1770, to a sum not less than eighty-seven thousand pounds.

FEW persons who drive only a pair of horses, can make a constant use of a coach or chariot without a spare horse, when therefore we observe, how many drive with four or six horses, the average of three cannot but be deemed a moderate calculation. Now the number of wheels taxed to raise the above supply, must be equal to twenty-one thousand seven hundred and fifty *four-wheeled*

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wheeled carriages, which consequently require sixty-five thousand two hundred and fifty horses, allowing three horses to each carriage.

LET us next consider the hackney coaches, which are exempted from the above tax by their licences; three thousand horses are necessarily kept for this purpose. In the next place we may, I believe, moderately allow, that twenty thousand horses are constantly employed for the numerous stages and post-coaches throughout the kingdom. These are likewise exempted both from the taxation and licence, and this estimate will appear the more reasonable, when we consider that upwards of seventy horses are made use of in stage-coach work, to a single village in the neighbourhood of London. These several lists of horses being added together, make the number eighty-eight thousand two hundred and fifty,—*for the use of pleasure carriages only.*

IT would be difficult to estimate the number of saddle horses at this time in England. Tradesmen who thirty years past were happy to survey the neighbouring villages on foot, now parade it to their more distant country-houses on horseback. How many horses are required for the
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field and turf? How many to recruit our army, and supply the exportation? The innumerable draught horses employed for carts, waggons, and the various business of husbandry, are beyond computation. Let us, moreover, take a view of the breeding and rising stock, and then how astonishing will the numbers appear? But the considerate reader must be still more astonished when he reflects that every horse requires four acres of land for his annual support.

GREAT BRITAIN, though a fertile, is but a small island, and the consequences must be equally fatal to its inhabitants, whether the produce of the country be destroyed by a swarm of locusts, or by an useless breed of horses. Shall we then murmur at the want of bread, when we have wantonly, nay wickedly, appropriated the land ordained for the use of man, to feed unnecessary horses. This is our bane and destruction, for ten horses will consume the produce of as much land as *will feed twenty cows or oxen, or ever one hundred sheep*. And these creatures which chew the cud, and divide the hoof, were particularly appointed by Providence for the support of man.

THEY

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THEY are, indeed, the true source of plenty; they supply us not only with food, but with materials also for our various manufactories. The fleece, by our ancestors, was revered, and considered as the staple commodity of this kingdom. Can a sufficient reason be given, why it should now be less in our estimation?

PROVIDENCE still continues to bless us with fleeces of equal worth;—can any reason be assigned why we should reduce or diminish the number of them? Can the ridiculous exportation of horses stand in competition with the exportation of our woollen manufactories?—When a horse is exported, the gain, if it can be so called, is limited; but in breeding black cattle and sheep, a blessing is widely diffused throughout the whole community:—The landholders are paid, the manufacturers employed, our navigation extended, our navy supported, the merchants encouraged, and our people fed.

THESE essential points demand our greatest attention, they likewise demand the attention of the legislative power, or in a short time, where will that very power itself look for protection? Not surely in the prevailing luxury of the age, therefore let us endeavour to check that luxury, and prevent, as much as possible, its pernicious consequences. The best motto I ever

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faw upon a carriage was, *I cannot walk*; but what can be said for thousands, *who will not walk*?

HAVING thus endeavoured to investigate the true cause of a real scarcity in the necessary articles of life, I would wish to point out the means of plenty, and in order to lay the foundation of such future abundance, I do most earnestly recommend a HEAVY TAX TO BE LAID ON HORSES, this will not only bring in a considerable revenue to the state, but it will also aid and relieve those subjects which are most distressed. The present misfortune bears hardest upon those who are the least able to support the weight of the burthen, upon such as have small circumscribed incomes, clergymen without livings, subaltern officers, widows, and orphans; but in particular upon common soldiers, and all the industrious labouring poor throughout the kingdom.

PERHAPS it may be urged, that this tax will be injurious to the Land-holders. But let me ask them, what avails their improved rents, while all the necessaries of life are doubled upon themselves? Let me again ask them whether, by such improved rents, they are better enabled to support their country mansions, or maintain their

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their families antient Hospitality? Surely no. The Land-holder is then an equal sufferer in this general calamity.

THIS tax may moreover be made serviceable to the Farmer, because he may plough, and do the chief of his business with oxen, (*as his forefathers did*) and the few horses that may be necessary will be bought at a cheaper rate. It cannot affect the carriage of our merchandize; on the contrary, it must reduce the price, because oxen may be shod in such a manner as to render horses of draught unnecessary on most roads. In short, such a tax, in the most extensive sense of civil policy, will produce a most desirable effect, by restraining inconsiderate persons from riding, who ought to walk; and by keeping *the more prudent* at home, who will thereby be enabled to attend with greater assiduity to their domestic concerns, in order to support their families. It will likewise tend to lessen the resort to places of public entertainment, folly, and dissipation. Thus a tax upon horses will prove *a heavy clog, happily affixed to the wheels of luxury*.

THERE now remains only these questions to be asked: Whether our pride or our happiness is

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is dearest to us? Whether our useful poor must be starved, to feed unnecessary horses? And whether stables or dwelling-houses will prove most to the advantage and safety of our country?

July 7, 1772.

By way of Postscript, give me leave to add the following observations:

FIRST, To enable us, annually, to export ten horses, it will be necessary to keep a stock of above seventy. These horses are generally conveyed to the nearest ports, and consequently they afford less encouragement to our navigation than any other merchandize.—Eighteen hundred and ten horses were exported last year, exclusive of those on which no duty was paid. *Now view the comparison.*

SECONDLY, Twenty cows, when turned of six years old, if no accident befall them, will have yielded eighty carcases of veal, and full ten thousand four hundred pounds of butter, or cheese in proportion; and if they are then fattened, we have twenty beeves, with tallow, hides, and offal.

THIRDLY,

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THIRDLY, One hundred sheep, when turned of four years old, will have furnished us with four hundred fleeces of wool, and probably with two hundred lambs likewise, and their wool also. We have then the carcases of the sheep, with their suet and skins.

FOURTHLY, A fleece of wool, taken upon an average throughout the kingdom, weighs about three pounds and an half.—A pound of wool, in its original state, is worth about seven-pence, when made into hose or cloth, it frequently becomes worth five or six shillings.—What an encouragement and support is this to the industrious poor, and what a benefit to the kingdom in general?

THE preceding Letters will, I apprehend, be sufficient to convince the unprejudiced reader, that the exorbitant Price of Provisions arises from a *real*, and not from an *artificial* scarcity; especially as *all* the Associations which have attempted to reduce this price, since the publication of my first Letter, have been unsuccessful: indeed universal experience has so fully proved the truth of what I there asserted, that it will be needless to urge any thing farther to establish the *reality* of our present distress.

SINCE

SINCE then we are, at *last*, convinced that there is a *real* scarcity of provisions, I shall now deliver my sentiments more at large upon this very important subject, wherein I shall endeavour to give plain reasons, and produce facts, to support what I shall advance.

IN the first place, I shall further consider the true cause of a *real* Scarcity of Provisions.

IN the second place, I shall point out the consequences that must at *all* times naturally result from a Scarcity of Provisions.

AND, in the third place, I shall propose a plan that may remove the cause of our distresses, and, I hope, effectually restore Plenty, Riches, and Power, to Great Britain.

SECTION

SECTION I.
THE TRUE
CAUSES
OF A
REAL SCARCITY
OF
PROVISIONS,
Further considered.

IT is much to be lamented that the people of this once happy country, should have lost sight of their grand source of Plenty, Riches, and Power, by blending the productions of the land all together, without the least distinction. Instead of making the most of the benefits with which Providence has blessed us, and giving proper encouragement to our staple commodities, we have unfortunately adopted quite a contrary policy. To illustrate these reflections, I will distinguish what are the staple or natural commodities

medities of our country, and what are not. The surface of our earth yields us two staple commodities, the first and great one is Wool, because it far excels in quality *any* wool produced in the nations which rival us in the manufacture of that article; this has been demonstrated for many centuries, from the encouragement which the French have constantly given to obtain our sheep ever since we refused them our wool, that they might improve the breed of their own; for this purpose they always require a fresh supply, because our sheep (happy for us, did we consider it), from the nature of the French lands, degenerate yearly; and consequently, every succeeding fleece grows coarser than the former one.

THE French, Dutch, and Flemish, in the reign of Edward the Third, bought English wool subject to a duty of fifty shillings *per* Pack, which is Two-pence Halfpenny *per* Pound weight; a very extraordinary Duty indeed, near four hundred and fifty years ago, which proves the striking disparity of their wool, when compared with ours in these days. This trade was carried on to so large an extent, that the duty amounted to two hundred and fifty thousand pounds *per annum*. Notwithstanding by this traffick, a great deal of ready money brought into the nation, besides

besides adding such an immense sum to the revenue, (which will be found materially different from granting bounties upon corn) this trade was discovered to be very injurious, and therefore a total prohibition took place; heavy penalties being inflicted on those persons who attempted to export either our sheep or wool. Here our ancestors began to lay the foundation of the British empire; they saw their real interest; they saw that whilst men, women, and children, were busied in working up the fleece, they were also fed with the mutton. Then our people multiplied; acquired wealth and power; and lest the Nobles of the Land should forget the fleece, they were seated upon Wool-sacks in the Senate-house.

I SHALL take more particular notice of the fleece hereafter, for it is of such importance, that, in my humble opinion, the very prosperity of our country depends upon it.

THE second staple that the surface of our earth yields, is Leather.

THIS is a capital staple. Our valuable oxen are ever ready to labour; our fruitful cows give us milk, butter, and cheese; and when we slaughter these useful animals, they supply us with beef,

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beef, which, in point of quality, far excels that of all other nations; besides tallow to make soap and candles: And last of all, their hides afford us the best of leather, which becomes a valuable manufactory of shoes and boots for home consumption, no less than for exportation. Our people are also employed, and our country is enriched in the exportation of gloves, made from the skins of sheep and lambs, and the article of Leather, upon the whole, in a variety of different forms, gives constant bread to many thousand different artificers.

METALS, such as Iron, Tin, Lead, and Copper, are staple commodities, because they are found in the mountains and bowels of the earth; where we likewise find coals, that enables us to refine and work up these metals into the various forms that are necessary for the use of man, and at a cheaper rate also, than they can be manufactured abroad, where such metals and coals do not lie contiguous to each other.

THE mines of Great Britain are, in fact, of higher importance than the mines of Mexico and Peru; for the production of iron is infinitely more advantageous to this kingdom than the production of gold, even supposing the same number of people were employed in searching after each;
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for the latter, when found, is almost in a state of perfection, and therefore it can never be much increased in value by labour. But if we only view our iron manufactory for a moment, how amazingly must the imagination be struck, when we consider what astonishing numbers of people are employed in making the various tools, bolts, screws, nails, hinges, locks, stoves, and engines, &c. which are necessary for use, besides the infinite variety of articles merely ornamental: Iron thus improved, becomes an universal commodity, and is the first staple we collect from the bowels of the earth.

To shew the importance that iron is of to us, to shew how far it will admit of improvement, by art, and also how much it enriches our country by employing our people, I shall notice in particular the main spring of a watch, which is increased in value after being dug out of the mine (by labour only) above a million of times*.

GLASS, China, and Earthen-ware, in like manner, are staple commodities, because they

* Some curious Files that are made from Iron, are sold wholesale after the rate of six pounds per ounce, and the pendulum springs to watches are worth thirty-eight pounds per ounce.

are

are made from flints and clay, of which we have a stock inexhaustible.

FISH also is a staple, because our fisheries not only employ our people, but the fish which we catch are excellent food, and all that we export is a clear gain: our fisheries, moreover, are nurseries for seamen, therefore they should be the constant objects of our highest consideration. Well may this island then be deemed the Land of Plenty, as the surface yields an abundance of corn and cattle; as the mountains are mines of wealth, and the waters abound with fish. Providence has lavishly blessed us with the necessaries of life, and with employment as well as food for the People. The cheapness of food is the main spring of Commerce, consequently provisions should never be exported, but from motives of humanity alone, when a famine rages abroad.

CORN and Horses, fond as we are of exporting them, are no staple commodities; they are quite the contrary, and we have fatally deceived ourselves by imagining that they bring a great deal of money into the kingdom.

To support what I have advanced, let us suppose with respect to corn, on the exportation of which

which we preposterously grant a bounty, that *A.* an English Merchant, ships on account of *B.* a foreigner, twenty thousand quarters of wheat, for which *A.* pays in our market forty thousand pounds, being forty shillings per quarter; when this wheat is shipped, *C.* our Government, pays to *A.* by way of bounty, five thousand pounds, that is five shillings per quarter; then the value of that corn is immediately reduced, and therefore it goes to the foreign market for no more than thirty-five thousand pounds; consequently upon an equal barter, *B.* can only ship goods, the produce of his country, in return, to the value of thirty-five thousand pounds; then let *C.* our Government, charge a duty on that sum of twelve and a half *per Cent.* equal to five shillings on forty, and we shall find that *C.* will lose by the barter six hundred and twenty-five pounds. But to the misfortune of our country, we pay, among ourselves, this bounty and this duty also. We carry the produce of our lands to foreign markets, at our own expence, and we bring back *foreign* produce at our own expence likewise; thus we doubly increase our taxes.

THE lower we have the price of wheat, the more we lose by the exports, as we pay the bounty whenever that article is under forty shillings a quarter; however,

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however, let us farther suppose, that the commission given by *A.* to *B.* is also for foreign produce to the value of forty thousand pounds in the market abroad, then the bounty and duty will be equal, but in that case *C.* has paid *A.* five thousand pounds, and the Lords of the land where *B.* lives, not having paid him *any thing*, has he not therefore a demand upon *A.* for the balance, which is just five thousand pounds? and must not our nation be that sum the poorer by this exchange? Hence it is evident, that the kingdom suffers a loss of five thousand pounds upon every forty thousand pounds exported in grain; for we are taking seventeen shillings and six-pence in the pound in this traffick, while we are paying twenty shillings; how is this balance to be paid? not by enlarging the trade, for that will increase the evil;—nor by bills of exchange, for they will only put off the payment, and the exchange will run against us. The answer is very plain, the balance must be paid in specie, and this has drained us of our Portugal gold, and impoverished our country. Does any State upon the face of the earth, besides ourselves, grant a bounty upon corn? Some persons are now of opinion, that a bounty should be given to encourage the *importation* of corn; suppose, therefore, that a bounty should be granted, (which God forbid) of five shillings on
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fifty, are we not, in that case, paying foreigners twenty-two shillings in the pound? By this *traffick* will not our nation lose twelve and a half *per cent.* upon the export, and ten *per cent.* upon the import, which together make twenty-two and a half *per cent.* upon the return? yet this we give to foreigners by taxing ourselves.

CORN, at best, is but a fluctuating commodity; it depends naturally upon the seasons, and if one year we have it in plenty, it may be very scarce the next: How then are we to give *certain* employment to our seamen in a traffick so *precarious*? They can only have *constant* employment in the exportation of our *staples*, and these staples of course should always be the first objects of attention with the Government.

THE Israelites brought Corn out of Egypt; in like manner all nations that want bread will naturally search for it, and when found, will carry it for themselves; but we don't give foreigners that trouble, we even send it to them at our own expence. Poland, Sicily, Barbary, and the chief of the corn countries are always paid the full price for grain, and yet they are impotent and poor.

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Then what strange infatuation can induce us to rival them in this article, when we are in possession of the greatest staples in the world? We have so much neglected and oppressed the manufacture of these staples, that we seem almost ready to give them up, that we may become Horse-breeders and Corn-growers to half Europe; and in order to *drive the nail that will not go*, we have frequently paid the bounty on wheat when the price has been much under twenty shillings per quarter: consequently then, foreigners eat our bread twenty-five *per cent.* cheaper than we eat it ourselves. Which will be the greatest advantage to us, to send our provisions abroad *with*, or even *without* a bounty, and thereby advance the price of our staple commodities, prevent their sale, destroy our trade, and starve our people, or to keep our provisions at home, to export our merchandize, (with a constancy) extend our commerce, employ our inhabitants, and enrich our country? We grant no bounty upon any of our staple commodities; we are paid twenty shillings in the pound upon the export of them all. Neither flax nor any commodity whatsoever that is produced from the surface of our land, can be a staple which does not give food, and also employment to the people.

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LET us next take notice of the destructive practice of exporting Horses. If we export sixty horses at five years old, we must keep brood mares, and a rising stock, that together will at least amount to four hundred and forty-five more, and these will require the produce of one thousand one hundred and twelve acres of land for their yearly subsistence, if we allow each horse no more than two acres and a half*; I apprehend less cannot do, for although they are chiefly young, they are in general put into the best pastures, especially the mares and colts; many of them also have plenty of corn. Upon this average I mean to include all the land together through the kingdom, good and bad, that is under a state of cultivation. Suppose the breeder should sell these horses one with another, for twenty pounds a-piece, one thousand two hundred pounds will be brought into the kingdom; or rather, we shall have credit for that sum upon our export, besides the duty of

* Suppose that ninety-five brood mares should bring eighty-five foals, and that five of them should die yearly,

then we shall have	95	mares,
	80	colts,
	75	two years old,
	70	three ditto,
	65	four ditto,
	60	five years old for exportation.

The rising stock 445

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five

five shillings on each horse, which added together, will amount to one thousand two hundred and fifteen pounds. Trifling as the exportation of horses may appear, the number in 1771 amounted (as I observed in my last letter) to one thousand eight hundred and ten that paid the duty, (and I am told, that many are sent abroad that pay none) therefore, according to the above calculation, we shall find that they have devoured the produce of thirty-three thousand five hundred and forty-acres of land before they were shipped. These horses at twenty pounds a-piece, and the duty, will come to thirty-six thousand six hundred and fifty-two pounds ten shillings, which may appear to some inconsiderate persons a large sum; but let me ask them, how many of our people have been either employed or fed by keeping the horses in question? Let the Reader view the contrast; had the thirty-three thousand five hundred and forty-four acres of land been appropriated for the breed of sheep, we should have acquired a hundred and thirty-four thousand one hundred and seventy-six fleeces of wool yearly; and if we suppose that these fleeces, one with another, are worth two shillings a-piece, and estimate the labour (taking all our woollen manufactories upon an average) to be treble in value to the wool, then we shall find that the labour alone will come to
 forty

forty thousand two hundred and fifty-two pounds sixteen shillings. Now, admitting that the people we employ in the various branches of our woollen manufactory should earn twenty pounds each (one with another) yearly, here we shall find employment for two thousand and twelve of our Poor; the labour added to the raw materials, will make the amount fifty-three thousand six hundred and seventy pounds eight shillings; and from this sum, if we deduct thirty-six thousand six hundred and fifty-two pounds ten shillings, being what our *favourite* horses fold for, we shall find a balance in favour of the fleece, amounting to seventeen thousand and seventeen pounds eighteen shillings. But I must proceed farther, for if we even keep our sheep until they are four years old, they will yield us forty-one thousand nine hundred and thirty skins, and their carcases also. These skins at ten-pence each, and the offal at only eight-pence, will come to three thousand one hundred and forty-four pounds fifteen shillings; and the carcases weighing only fifty pounds each, one with another, will produce two million ninety-six thousand five hundred pounds of mutton, which, at no more than three-pence per pound, will come to twenty-six thousand two hundred and six pounds five shillings.

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AND now I will ask my countrymen a plain question, which of these three commodities is the staple of Great Britain, our fleece when manufactured into goods, our corn with or without a bounty, or our horses?

THE fleece has unfortunately been much neglected, and that is the reason why our wool has not advanced in an equal pace with the skins and carcases of our sheep; had the demand for each of them been equal, the advance, of course, would have been equal also; but the contrary is self-evident, for the kind of wool that is now sold at seven-pence halfpenny per pound (notwithstanding the large quantity that is smuggled yearly into France) was sold at six-pence halfpenny thirty-three years ago, and it has not been sold under that price since. Sheepskins that were sold twenty-five years ago for thirty shillings the great hundred, are now sold for five pounds, and lamb-skins that bear half the price are equally enhanced. The price of mutton I need not mention; that is well known, and severely felt: if then we barely consider the variety of hands that our fleece passes thro', before it becomes an article of commerce, and consider that all these hands not only support themselves, but enrich their country at the same time,

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time, our negligence in this respect must appear actually unpardonable.

THAT the reader may have a clearer idea of this very important matter, I will give him a short account of our woollen manufactory. In the first place, the fleece must be broken or sorted, the labour of which is five shillings per pack; next (for worsted goods) it must be combed; (this reminds me of Bishop Blaze, who found out the art of combing, though he has been long forgotten, and his important discovery much neglected); the price of combing wool single, is two-pence, and double three-pence halfpenny per pound. Then follows the spinning; the prices depend upon the fineness; for some we pay three shillings and six-pence a pound, and it is well known, that large quantities of worsted yarn are constantly sold in Norwich at so high a rate as five shillings and six-pence a pound. Thus our own wool, when only manufactured into yarn, increases in value six or seven times; I must indeed confess, that this is our *finest* wool, such as is produced from *Commons* and *Common Fields* that are not inclosed; and I must farther observe, that the price we pay for spinning this wool, is higher than that of coarser kinds, because it is for the manufactory of crapes and fine goods; yet it is by these
fine

fine goods that we get the most money, therefore to discourage the trade either at home or abroad, must be a species of political madness.

FORMERLY our general mournings used to be crape and bombazeen, to give encouragement to these most valuable branches of our woollen manufacture. The law likewise that directed us to bury the dead in woollen, was made for the same salutary purpose.

WE neither pay the Italians nor the Chinese any thing for our wool, but we pay them much for their silks. Numberless (comparatively speaking) are the hard dollars which go out on China Bottoms.

THE yarn I have mentioned is yet to weave, and also to pass through various hands, before it becomes an article of merchandize. Our best wool is very little inferior to the Spanish, and it would be well for our country if we never worked up another bag of theirs.

IN Postlethwaite, Vol. II. page 841, the reader may find the following table:

To

To make one piece of Spanish cloth will employ,

	Men.	Wom.	Boys.	Days.	No.
Dyeing, —	1	0	0	1	1
Beating and picking	0	2	0	4	8
Scribbling, —	2	0	0	5	10
Spinning the chain,	0	8	0	7	56
Spinning the woof,	0	8	0	7	56
Winding the chain,	0	3	0	1	3
Warping, winding, quilts, and weaving, }	2	0	1	24	72
Spinning the list, —	0	2	0	2	4
Burling, — —	0	2	0	4	8
Milling, — —	1	0	0	1	1
Dressing, — —	4	0	0	5	20
	80	135	24	To.	239

THUS it appears, that to make only one piece of superfine cloth, two hundred and thirty-nine persons * will be employed one day; the labour of these persons at no more than twelve-pence per day, one with another, will amount to eleven pounds nineteen shillings, and so much will

* Either boys or women may do the work that men are not required to do.

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that town, state, or empire, be enriched where these persons live.

HAVING mentioned the labour of women and children, I must, in this place, claim the reader's particular attention.

WHEN our Woollen Manufactory flourishes, the wives and children of small Farmers, Cottagers, and Labouring Men, can earn nearly as much money by spinning at the wheel, as the man can get by his industry in the field; should he then fall sick or lame, the family will work with double diligence to keep him from the parish, until his health returns; but when our woollen manufactory declines, the man alone must wield the labouring oar. Women and children in harvest only, are wanted in the field, if some trifles are excepted that may be done by boys; therefore, should misfortunes then attend the man, he and the family, all together, must fall upon the parish, and what was heretofore thought a great discredit, now ceases to be disreputable from its melancholy frequency.

I HAVE been told, that our MOST GRACIOUS SOVEREIGN intends to take away the Plates from
Race

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Race Horses; I hope that report is true; and I moreover hope, that his MAJESTY intends now to give that encouragement to the fleece which has but too long been given to the Horse, by converting the Royal Plates into premiums, to improve the growth of our finest wool.

To manufacture goods cheaper than any other State can manufacture them, will at all times prove a secure treaty of commerce: That alone will procure a sale, which no laws can fully check, for men will always run a risque when there is a view of gain; they will not regard the breach of any law, that tells them they shall not buy goods as cheap as possible in one place, and sell them for as much as possible in another: of this fact we have daily proofs in the number of our Smugglers.

It is the natural interest of every nation (like that of every man) to buy goods at the cheapest market; no man will willingly pay an hundred pounds at one place for a commodity, which he can buy for ninety pounds at another. This is an universal axiom,—holds good in all

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states, and can never be entirely abolished by any political institution, because it constitutes a fundamental principle of society.

LET us then, before it is too late, discover the impropriety of adding Farm to Farm, and inclosing Commons, where sheep and neat cattle were formerly kept. In the original state of these commons, the people had *all* they produced; whereas in their improved state of inclosure, the horses which are employed in cultivating them, consume a part of the produce, and the rest is injudiciously exported to foreigners. The people are therefore absolute sufferers by this improvement in our agriculture; the more we *inclose*, the more we *lose*, and every fancied attempt to gain by inclosure, in fact, exposes us to an increase of calamity.

IN my last letter I observed, that only fifty thousand horses were found in all England in Queen Elizabeth's reign fit for service; what are the numbers now? An innkeeper of London told me, that the stage coaches which he was concerned in, employed a thousand horses; now it is well known that these horses are kept very high, and therefore each of them will consume in hay, oats, and beans, the produce of
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six acres of land at least; consequently the whole will devour the produce of six thousand acres; and provided these horses should stand their work four years, one with another (what they will not do) then we shall find, that to keep up the stock, will require one thousand eight hundred and fifty-one more; and if we allow each of these only two acres and an half of land, then we shall find that four thousand six hundred and twenty-seven acres will be taken up for their support; which being added to the six thousand before mentioned, will prove that this nation loses the yearly produce of ten thousand six hundred and twenty-seven acres of land in the course merely of one man's connection with stage coaches. These coaches, moreover, are in a great measure supported by persons who fly through various countries without having any further business than that of gratifying an idle curiosity, and who also are tempted to spend that money, which in justice to their families, they ought to have kept for more rational purposes, besides losing what they never can regain, their TIME.

SINCE then one thousand horses fully employed, and the rising stock, will destroy the produce of ten thousand six hundred and twenty-seven acres of land yearly; how many millions
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of acres will all the horses *destroy* that are kept in this kingdom?

It is demonstrable, that the produce of this kingdom, and Ireland together, will supply near *twice* the number of their people with such a plenty of food, that the price of bread and all provisions, upon an average, shall be cheaper than they are at this time by above one third: It is likewise demonstrable, that *all* our industrious poor shall be employed, and that *all* our merchandize which arises from staple commodities shall be exported to foreign markets, cheaper than at present, by ten, fifteen, or, in some instances, twenty *per cent*.

THE destructive measure of engrossing Farms, inclosing Fields and Commons, will appear the more glaring from the following observations.

WHEN Farms were small, the people that cultivated our lands were humble, and attended to every thing that could produce food for man; the housewife, with great care, looked after her poultry, pigs, and dairy, while the husbandman was busied in the field, vieing with his neighbour in raising the fruits of the earth. These fruits the Farmers sold for the ready penny, and the markets were well supplied with the necessaries

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necessaries of life. People of their rank were not rich enough *then*, to give the land credit longer than from year to year; whereas, *now*, the opulent Farmer can give his land credit for four or five years, and that enables him to breed horses, makes him want but few people, and at last terminates in a general scarcity of provisions; not that this is the opulent Farmer's design; on the contrary, he never once considers how it may affect his country; all that he thinks of, is how far he can serve himself. Here, therefore, some restriction is absolutely requisite to prevent private interest from preponderating against the scale of public good. What are our laws, but so many restraints on individuals, prescribing certain limits which they shall not go beyond, to the injury of the community? Yet we too often see our unhappy fellow-creatures suffer death for taking bread, or what is immediately wanted to satisfy the cravings of nature, while we permit the Farmer to destroy the produce of one thousand acres of land with impunity, and patiently tolerate the prostitution of that earth to the maintenance of unnecessary horses, which Providence graciously designed for the sustenance of the People. Individuals should never be permitted to pursue their own views in opposition to the national welfare, and the following little anecdote will abundantly support the justice of my remark.

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TRAVELLING the other day between Winchester and Andover, I stopped to converse with some labouring men who were at work in what appeared to be the common field, in the parish of Newton Stacey; I found, that though the field was not inclosed, yet it was so divided, that every man not only knew his own ground, but that he also made such use of it as he pleased. I learned that formerly there were six farms in the parish, but that now there were only three, and a small one; that one of the present Farmers had almost two hundred sheep, but that the rest had none. One of them in particular, (a labourer said) had a *mort* of horses; that he generally kept from twenty to twenty-three, and that he looked upon this farmer to be a horse-courser.

BEFORE the field was divided, each farmer turned in as many times twenty ewes as he had yard lands; all the sheep were mixed together, and attended by one shepherd, who folded the flocks at night on each man's ground, according to his number of yard lands; and therefore every man was sure to keep up his stock, which he was further interested in doing, because he could graze twenty ewes with their lambs, without any expence to himself from Michaelmas to Lady-Day, upon every yard land; the number
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of these yard lands was twenty-seven and a quarter, and consequently five hundred and forty-five ewes, with full as many lambs, were formerly kept there: Hence it is manifest, that the breed and stock of sheep in one little parish only, are now reduced from one thousand and ninety, to less than four hundred; and it is moreover *manifest*, that this reduction could not have taken place but from the inclosure.

THE downs in Hampshire and Dorsetshire, and the plains of Wiltshire, are in a peculiar manner adapted for the breed of sheep; for there they are never subject to the rot, a disease that often proves fatal to sheep in low countries, where the land is fitter to feed neat cattle.

THUS, upon the whole, it appears evident, that we have brought upon ourselves a real Scarcity of every Article of Food that is required for the Support of Man, and are now ready to murmur at all wise Providence for the want of Bread.

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THE parish of Newton Stacey is an epitome of the Kingdom, and our crime is very properly our punishment, in having wantonly, nay wickedly, given that bread to feed unnecessary horses, which is absolutely requisite for the maintenance of ourselves.

SECTION

SECTION II.
THE
CONSEQUENCES
That must at all Times naturally result from a
SCARCITY
OF
PROVISIONS.

THE second point under consideration, I shall treat with as much precision as the nature of the subject will admit, in order that we may clearly understand the present situation of our People, Manufactures, and Commerce.

THE distresses of our fellow-creatures in almost every county throughout the kingdom, are so affecting as to shock humanity. Those who
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dispute this truth, will do well to stop their career upon the road occasionally, and ask the poor how they live? They will be told as I have often been, that the poor never lived, *never existed* so wretchedly; can it possibly be otherwise, when they are denied the common necessaries of life?

As I was lately travelling between Andover and Basingstoke, I overtook a feeble, but very decent looking man, who from his appearance, seemed to be seventy, although he assured me he was but forty-nine; from him I learned the following particulars: "That his wages were "but six shillings *per* week; that he had a wife "and six children; that three of them were "able to provide for themselves, but that the "rest were then upon his hands; that neither "his wife nor these children were able to give "him much assistance; that half a bushel of flour, "when baked into bread, served them one "week," which bread is sold at Basingstoke for four shillings and six-pence. Is this man enabled to provide clothes or fuel, to pay house-rent, and procure the bare necessaries of life for his family? When I asked him how he lived, he shook his head and said, "*live!* Sir, we *bide* "here."

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I HAVE been told by many like unhappy, patient, industrious people, who despair and languish out a miserable existence, without even a hope of better times, that formerly they could save as much money in the summer, as would buy a pig or two to fatten in the autumn; but that now, unfortunately for them, they have no money, and consequently, that they can buy no pigs; even the few, *the very few*, who can scrape together as much money as would purchase one, are not able to maintain it when bought, corn is so excessively dear.

NOTWITHSTANDING this, and much more which I could relate, was it needful, we may too often hear many inconsiderate persons whose better fate has, for the present, enabled them to roll in luxury, declaring with great indifference, when regaling with the choicest fruits in season, or enjoying themselves over a flowing bowl after a sumptuous dinner, "that "our poor never lived better; that there is "plenty of meat in our markets;" and, moreover, like the Author of the destructive Eastern, Western, and Northern Tours, (productions which are calculated to mislead and deceive the Public) "that the higher we have the Price of "Provisions, the more our poor are compelled "to labour." Since then our poor, in their opinion,

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opinion, live so well, let them (along with the *ingenious* Author alluded to) exchange situations with the poor for only six months; it may prevent a fit of the gout; however, we may be well assured, that it will teach them humanity. Wherein are these people better than the poor? they are only richer, or perhaps, many of them are not even *so* rich, provided their debts were paid.

THE great Author of our being never meant that Riches should prove the means of oppression.

SUBORDINATION is absolutely necessary for the good government of every state; but then we should reflect what we *were*, and what we *are* to be. The more we are exalted in station and titles, the more we have to risk, the more we have to lose; therefore let us reflect, that the protection of our persons, as well as of our property, depends at all times upon the strength of the people; and that their strength will always be proportionable to their numbers.

HE that vainly thinks to avail himself of his houses or his lands, deceives himself; land is but the *source* of riches. The Almighty hand alone can remove it from whence he fixed it; and should

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should he suffer the produce of our land to be destroyed upon the ground, where are our riches then? That land *then*, will be like an empty house, for which no rent is paid, and will merely be a nominal advantage to the owner.

LAND, Water, and Labour together, are the whole source of riches. Acquired riches arise from them; and these riches consist of corn, cattle, merchandize, and specie; therefore when we fairly state the quantities and qualities of these commodities at any two given times, we shall know the comparative difference of our riches, and know whether our commerce has been in our favour, or against us.

So far are provisions from being advanced by the plenty of money now in this kingdom, as some persons, from viewing this matter only superficially have imagined, that to our great mortification, to our great distress, I can safely affirm, the real scarcity of money with us at this moment is such, that the effects will be more severely felt in a short time, than they have been for centuries past.

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THESE speculatists are extremely apt to suppose the nation rich, but they are fatally mistaken; for whether we are considered as individuals, or as a people, we never were so poor.

THE public, or the body of the people, indeed, owe to various creditors one hundred and twenty-seven millions, without having a single shilling to pay it with. Is this a proof of our riches? Our stocks of corn, sheep, and cattle, are less now than they ever were, and the prices they bear are now higher than they ever were. Are these proofs of our riches?

FIFTEEN or twenty years ago, Portugal gold was in such plenty in the metropolis, that men in business were desired by their bankers to draw on them in Ports; there was, in fact, such an inundation of that gold throughout the kingdom, that we may safely say, it at least, equalled all the sterling coin in our circulation. Where is this gold now? Alas! the chief part of it is gone abroad, to pay the balance of a losing trade, and what remains is either light or adulterated: Where then is our wonderful opulence? Are the arguments of our poverty to be considered as an evidence of our wealth, and are we to think ourselves rising in prosperity the nearer

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nearer we are pushed to the verge of destruction?

OUR coinage price of gold is three pounds seventeen shillings and ten-pence halfpenny *per* ounce; but the price of bullion has been almost four pounds one shilling for many years. This has tempted people to carry our gold out of the kingdom, as well as to melt it down, and what remains they have sweated, filed, clipped, and counterfeited, in such a manner, as materially increases the weight of *national misfortunes*.

I APPREHEND that a scarcity of bullion, like a scarcity of any other commodity, will advance the price,—how then are we to reconcile the contradiction of general opinion with respect to our coin? According to this opinion we have had a great influx of money, which should have made it plentiful; now if that has been really the case, the plenty in opposition, not only to common sense, but to universal experience, has actually advanced the value of gold as a commodity; however, the evil is not confined to gold; our coinage price of silver is five shillings and two-pence *per* ounce, whereas the price of silver itself, has long been above five shillings and six-

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pence; and this is one reason that no silver has been coined in the Tower for twelve years.

AN amazing quantity, indeed, of shillings has been coined not worth nine-pence halfpenny a piece, otherwise how should we have got any thing that *looked like silver* for change? Thus while almost the whole of our good silver has gone into the melting pot, bad silver has issued out of private mints, to a public loss of more than twenty *per Cent*.

IF all our gold and silver coin, therefore, should be called in, how many millions must we add to the National Debt, by taxing the people to make good the deficiency? No doubt the debts we owe to each other, are far larger than they ever were; but will any rational man urge that as a proof of our riches? The bare attempt to reduce these debts, has already brought distress and ruin on many families who never imagined that adversity would have fallen to their lot.

LUXURY has, no doubt, prevailed too much among people in every rank of life; but the chief misfortunes that have attended many honest men in business, arise from quite a different

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rent cause; they proceed from an increase of expence, without an increase of gain; for while in rent, taxes, house-keeping, and servants wages, a tradesman is compelled to pay full one third more than he paid formerly; he is obliged to sell his wares ('tis too well known) for a smaller profit than he ever did; therefore the money that he should lay by for his family, is taken from him as fast as he can get it, to defray these extraordinary demands; and instead of growing rich as heretofore, he is brought under difficulties even to maintain his extended credit; this also makes the general risk in trade far greater than usual. Many persons besides, of middling fortune, are driven into trade, because they cannot live upon the interest of their money*.

THE more people there are in trade, the smaller share will fall to each, notwithstanding their expences will still remain nearly the same.

NECESSITY too often induces men of indifferent principles, to act a dishonest part, by

* If the necessaries of life advance while the interest of money continues the same as formerly, it will of course affect many persons who were considered independent.— Then must it not more materially affect all that have small incomes; but in particular the officers as well as the common men both in our *army* and *navy*.

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transferring the goods they were entrusted with into the hands of harpies, through the connivance of a middle man (the broker) who sells these goods from ten to thirty *per Cent.* under their first cost.

THIS is a practice that calls loudly for redress; for while merchants and wholesale dealers are thus defrauded on one hand, the retailer is *greatly* injured on the other; because these goods are chiefly sold to *itinerant hawkers* and *smugglers*, who under the sanction of a licence, convey waggon loads of them into every part of the kingdom, where they take away the trade and ready money from the fair dealer, as they are able to avail themselves of every advantage both in buying and in selling, while they neither pay the parochial nor government taxes that are constantly falling upon the upright and resident trader.

Thus the honest man is oppressed on every side; no wonder then he fails, dies insolvent or leaves a family unprovided for.—No wonder that we see numbers of our once reputable fellow-citizens craving for menial places they never thought to fill, merely for subsistence in old age.

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EVERY sympathizing heart at an election, for a fifty pound employment, now-a-days, feels a pang, because only one candidate can be provided for. Whereas, if we look back, we shall find that the fathers to many of these candidates, retired from trade with ample fortunes early in life, on which they lived in comfort, and smiled upon the path they had trod with success.

WHEN our poor are employed, they are the strength and riches of our country; but when they are not employed, a thousand terrors stare us in the face: our parish rates in most of the large towns, are already double or treble what they were a few years ago. At Newport in the Isle of Wight, the advance is from one shilling and six-pence to four shillings and six-pence in the pound; at Winchester formerly they had but one rate of three-pence in the pound; last year, however, they had no less than twelve of these rates.

I NEED not multiply instances upon this point, because the fact is but too well known. At Alton; indeed, the rates continue nearly the same as heretofore, for this *very bad reason*, that

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for want of encouragement near one thousand of their poor manufacturers have left the place.

If then these rates advance with such rapidity while we employ our poor, what will they be when a third of them are out of work? Is not this nearly the case already, provided we take our manufactures in the gross throughout the kingdom? Upon an enquiry I am afraid, that the proposed average will be found too just: let us suppose the whole number of our people to be five millions, and that a fourth part of them are working manufacturers, who can earn one with another eighteen-pence per day; here we shall find that, provided only one third of these men are out of work, the loss to this kingdom will be above thirty-one thousand two hundred and forty-nine pounds a day, or nine million seven hundred and eighty thousand nine hundred and thirty-seven pounds (twice the interest of our National Debt) in the course of the year.

ALARMING, however, as this picture appears, the evil must be productive of more calamities than we apprehend at first view; for while one part of our poor are lingering out their days upon the parish, another part will emigrate either

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ther to our settlements, or to our enemies; and these are the most valuable of our inhabitants, for they are the ingenious, the industrious, who will rather seek their bread in foreign climes, than starve at home; they are more valuable to this nation than the guineas we hoard up, *if we now hoard any*, because these guineas bring in no interest;—in short, they are the *bees* of our country, who support the *drones*; and if we once lose these men, with their knowledge of our arts and manufactures, we can never get them back.

BUT, besides the people now spoken of, we have a third sort of poor, who will still prove more desperate, for they will prey upon the public. Robberies were never so frequent as at present; many unhappy wretches are driven to desperation; some die in goals, others are again let loose upon us, transported, or hanged: Will not all these things facilitate the depopulation of our county? Who is now to find our people work? The manufacturers have not money, neither have they their former credit; the extensiveness of the latter gave employment to our artificers for many years, and the demand for goods was chiefly to our colonies; but now the demand is lessened, and our commerce must be contracted; we are unable to give the Americans the

the usual credit, and they have not money to deal with us upon other terms.

If then our trade must be contracted, the duties arising from trade will diminish, and the same will also follow with respect to the excise; this diminution of the revenues must create new taxes, or an addition to the old ones; for except the deficiency is made up, it will be impossible for government to pay annually four millions and a half, the interest of our National Debt.

THE people who have invested their fortunes in the public funds, surely cannot live without receiving their interest, and when the commercial sources of public revenue fail, our load of taxes and our poor also, must fall upon the permanent property, upon the land.

WE are too illiberal in censuring our working people, because truly they have a taste for enjoyment; the old proverb says, *All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy*. A good workman will dispatch more business with a little relaxation, leaving him a spark of English freedom, than he will ever do by compulsion; compel him to labour, and you make him de-

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test his work. I would not by this be understood to encourage idleness; but, on the contrary, to promote industry; because a good workman, like a good sailor, will spend his money; therefore the consequence is plain, that necessity drives the one to work, and the other to sea again, where *like bees they collect and bring home fresh honey to the general hive*.

OUR artizans will never appear equally industrious, nor is that necessary; for a capital workman will dispatch more business in four days, than a bad one can in six.

MANKIND are stimulated by various motives to labour, tho' they all center in one; a man with a family must rise earlier, or work harder, than he that has none. The spirit of emulation should always be cherished, that will brace the sinews of industry, and urge men forward in order to provide a more comfortable subsistence for their families; but they will despair if their loads increase, while their strength remains almost the same. Therefore the price of provisions and the price of labour should always rise and fall together*.

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* Journeymen's wages, and also the rates of cartage, have been greatly advanced lately by the Magistrates of

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THE cheaper we make goods, the more we shall sell, and consequently the more we shall make. All engines, machines, and inventions, therefore, are of great importance, that reduce labour: the rule is general; for in the cultivation of our land, the cheaper the farmer tills his ground, the cheaper he can sell the produce; the cheaper a man saws his timber, makes his bricks, or procures his iron-work, the cheaper he can build his house, the cheaper he can let it.

The City of London. Ships that were built twenty years ago at six pounds ten shillings per ton, cannot now be built under eight pounds ten shillings. The freight of our goods does not appear to be upon the most desirable footing, from the following advertisement published by the West-India Merchants.

“ At a meeting of the Planters, Merchants, and Owners of Ships in the Jamaica trade, at the LONDON TAVERN, this 29th day of July, 1772, pursuant to notices given in the public papers, for taking into consideration the freight of sugars from Jamaica.

“ It appearing by the accounts of many of the capital ships, fitted out in the most frugal manner, for the three last voyages to Jamaica, that by means of the great advance upon seamen's wages, provisions and all other articles incident to shipping, the freights have fallen very short of defraying the expence of fitting out, supporting, and navigating the said ships, in every of the said voyages; in consequence whereof, considerable losses have been sustained by the owners. It is therefore agreed unani-

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The less a man pays in rent and taxes, and the cheaper he buys all his necessaries, of course the cheaper he can work.

WHY have we lost almost the whole of our trade for woollens to Turkey, Spain, Portugal, and Germany, and, in short, to every place but our own colonies? The answer is plain; the French make their goods cheaper than we can ours, and therefore they underfell us.

EXPERIENCE has convinced us, that we should not wholly rely on our colonies for a trade; besides, authentic accounts make it evident, that the population in America has been so rapid, as to double within the last twenty-five years:

“ mously, that unless there is an addition of SIX-PENCE the hundred weight, at least, to the old freight of THREE SHILLINGS AND SIX-PENCE, upon sugar brought from Jamaica, the navigation between Great Britain and that island must gradually diminish.”

Notwithstanding the advance of six-pence per hundred weight on the freight of sugars took place, the owners of ships declare, they are yet material sufferers; therefore it is manifest, that provided we permit the various heavy loads which I have repeatedly mentioned, to clog our STAPLE COMMODITIES, not only the navigation between Great Britain and Jamaica will gradually diminish, but to our inevitable ruin, the navigation between Great Britain and every part of the known world must gradually diminish.

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here is a geometrical progression in the quarter of a century, that seems to prophesy the independence of the Americans; whereas with us it is but too true, notwithstanding *we are determined not to believe it*, that our numbers are reduced in the same period of time, from about six millions to little more than four millions and a half. Lest we should deceive ourselves by imagining the number of people in this island are greater than they really are, I will once more survey the metropolis, and take notice of the consumption of coals, from which, as well as from the tables in my foregoing letters, it does not appear that there has been of late years an increase of people even in London.

WE must consider that our houses, rooms, and fires, are far larger than they used to be; and that coals amongst tradesmen as well as gentry, have been long an article of luxury; consequently far more fires have been kept than formerly, and the great number of country-houses also, has added much to the consumption. I must particularly remark that very large quantities of coals are now consumed in every county contiguous to the river Thames, up as far as Oxford; and likewise in Hertfordshire, near the river Lee, the consumption is great, because the wood is almost destroyed which used to be the
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chief fuel. Notwithstanding these things, the coals which are brought up the river Thames are increased only one fifth part in quantity within twenty years; for the duty of ten-pence per chaldron, in the year 1751, amounted to twenty-two thousand one hundred and ninety-six pounds one shilling and ten-pence, and in the year 1771 it came to no more than twenty-six thousand one hundred and thirty-seven pounds fourteen shillings and ten-pence; or if we take the average for five years, from 1751 to 1756, and from 1766 to 1771, the proportion of increase is almost identically the same.

WE are struck with the number of people, and suppose they are increased just as we are apt to think that this is the hottest or the coldest day, or that the pain we feel is greater than any we ever felt before, the present strikes the senses more powerfully than the past; we, indeed, may see a real increase of people in some of our principal manufacturing towns, but we forget the many large towns and antient boroughs, such as Thetford, and fifty places I could mention (were they not conspicuous to the observing eye), that are falling into ruins, and
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are but too much like many of our villages, almost desolate.

BUT to return to our foreign trade for woollens.—Though the land in France will produce no wool that can be made into worsted goods of any kind, without a mixture of ours, nor even into cloth for mens wear but what is very coarse, yet the French undersell us at Lisbon and other markets in these goods full fifteen *per cent*. They can comb two packs of their own wool, when mixed with one pack of ours, which they are supplied with from Ireland (in particular) at a very cheap rate; now let us suppose that the wool in Ireland is worth seven pounds per pack, and that the French even pay four pounds more to get it smuggled, and that their own wool is worth five pounds per pack, then we shall find that the three packs will stand them in twenty-one pounds.

IT is well known, from the cheapness of provisions, and all necessaries in the interior parts of France, that labour is there full one third lower than with us; therefore we must calculate the labour with them to be only double the value of the wool; then three packs of wool which they manufacture into worsted goods, will

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will cost them sixty-three pounds; but with us, if we set the wool at seven pounds per pack, three packs will come to twenty-one pounds; and as the labour here is treble in value to the wool, three packs of course, when manufactured, will cost us eighty-four pounds. Thus they have got our trade, for although their goods are inferior to ours in point of quality, the difference is more than made up in the quantity; because at a profit of five *per cent*. they sell as many goods for sixty-six pounds three shillings, as we can sell for eighty-eight pounds four shillings.

THIS is the more aggravating, as we are beaten with our own weapons.—Here we may see, if we will but open our eyes, the consequence of distressing our staple commodities, by suffering, nay even encouraging, the exportation of those that are not staple; nothing but staples should ever be exported, because every thing which is not a staple we stand in need of ourselves, and it is absurd in the extreme, to pay a bounty for sending a commodity out of the kingdom, which may absolutely ask another bounty to be brought back.

SUPPOSE Providence had blessed the French with our wool, and that theirs had fallen to our lot,

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lot, should we under these circumstances have rivalled them in the most important manufactory of the earth?

ENGLISH and Irish wool is as much superior to French wool, as the latter is superior to goats hair. Spanish wool will not mix with French wool, therefore without our *kind* assistance, they must immediately lose not only the most *valuable* part, but also the *principal* part of their woollen manufactory*.

INLAND trade is like a string of carriages following one another in a regular line; if the first stands still, it stops all the rest; but commerce is like a chain fixed to the staple of our natural productions, which extends itself to every part of the known world; it is brightened by constant use, and the various links support each other; yet if loaded with too great a weight, the curve will be increased. When such is the case, the chain will prove too short, the links will break or draw away our staple; without a foreign demand for our merchandize, our ships must lie moored in our roads, where they will perish, our sailors will be unemployed, our merchants and manufacturers, for want of cir-

* Is not Marfeilles one of the largest marts in Europe for English and Irish wool?

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culatation, (the life of every thing) will be rendered unable to fulfil the engagements which are necessary to support their commercial credit; our various workmen and industrious poor, for want of employment in large towns, will fall upon the parish, and when the inhabitants are no longer able to support them, THEY MUST ALTOGETHER FALL UPON THE LAND,

WHAT will advanced rents *then* avail the Land-holder, when he finds himself under an absolute necessity of paying one half of his receipts to relieve the poor of his famished country? If then the Land-holder will be no gainer by the advanced price of provisions, who will ultimately *be* the gainers?

THE late Failures, and our present Distresses, are preludes to the most dreadful calamities; mutual confidence and *private credit* are the pillars that support *public credit*.—If these are destroyed, we shall find, when too late, that the foundation will give way, the clamps will break, the cement that bound the superstructure together will dissolve, and the whole fabrick will tremble.

UNFORTUNATELY for this distressed country, we have suffered self-interest to triumph over

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public good; we have grasped at the shadow, while we have lost the substance; we have wounded the root and fapped the trunk of the tree, while we have been disputing about the freedom of its branches. Surely it would be madness in the crew of a ship, that has sprung a leak, to be busy in taking an advantage of each other, while the leak remains unstopped, and they are all together sinking.

MUCH more might be said to support my arguments, and prove the truths which I have severally asserted, but I apprehend more will not be needful; it is obvious that we have suffered the disease to become desperate; and from a mistaken principle in commerce, have advanced the price of Provisions, reduced the number of our people, enlarged our debts, and increased our taxes.

THESE various causes have so advanced the price of our merchandizes, as to prevent their sale in foreign markets: Hence we have lost our trade, our money, and our credit, and without an immediate alteration in the system of public policy, we are also in a speedy way of losing our country.

SECTION

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SECTION III.

A

P L A N

To remove the CAUSE of our

D I S T R E S S E S,

And effectually restore

PLENTY, RICHES, and POWER,

T O

G R E A T B R I T A I N.

FROM what has been advanced in the foregoing sheets, it will appear that where the labour of the ox can be accepted, it must be the real interest of our country to give him a preference to the horse, because the latter, * "all-admired as he is, presents us with nothing but his

* Vide the first Letter, page 6.

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" labour;

“ labour; he must also be maintained three or
“ four years before this labour can be expected;
“ and when he dies, his worth dies with him,
“ he will scarcely bring five shillings for the
“ hounds.”

LET us therefore draw a comparison between
the two respecting their use. The horse is swift,
fiere, and impatient; a creature formed by na-
ture to carry burthens, and well adapted for
pageantry and war. The ox is slow, sure, and
steady, and when he is inured to labour, he
will continue longer at his work than a horse;
therefore he will draw a heavy load for a long
journey almost as soon as a horse.

OUR forefathers worked their teams, and
ploughed with oxen, when the roads were *very*
bad; why cannot we do the same, now *our*
roads are very good?

THIRTY years ago all the cheese that came
out of the West to Maudlin-Hill, Wey-Hill,
and other fairs, was brought by oxen, but now
all such cheese is brought by horses.

IN the parish of Tunbridge formerly, they
had *one hundred and fifty* draught horses and
one

one thousand oxen, whereas now they have *six*
hundred horses, and *two hundred and fifty* oxen.
The oxen were worked no more than two
years, therefore the people had an annual sup-
ply of five hundred bullocks, but now they
have only one hundred and twenty-five*.

WHICH will travel the farthest *without* shoes,
an Ox, or a Horse? An Ox most certainly; then
why should he not *with* shoes? An ox will live
on *hay* when he works, and on *straw* when he
lies idle; but a horse requires *hay* and *corn*
when he works, and requires *hay* and *corn* also,
when he does nothing; besides, he wants much
looking after, whereas the ox wants only pro-
vender.

SIX oxen can draw a waggon out of the mire,
after it has set eight horses fast, and this they
are enabled to do from the make of their hoofs;

* Three hundred and seventy-five fat bullocks at fifteen
pounds each, will enrich the parish of Tunbridge five thou-
sand six hundred and twenty-five pounds a year, besides what
I must *again and again* repeat to be the great end of this
publication, feeding our people from the produce of our
own Land.

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as the toes of an ox divide and expand in pressing down, but close again in coming up; therefore they are neither impeded by friction on the sides, nor by pressure from the atmosphere; but both of these obstruct the horse. The hoof of an ox is twice as strong as the hoof of an heifer, which is a proof that he was intended for labour; but there is no difference between the hoof of a mare and the hoof of a horse*.

OXEN are gentler and fitter for the cultivation of our land than horses, and as a proof that they are *yet* capable of work, many Gentlemen, to their GREAT CREDIT, plough land of *all* kinds, and work *all* their teams with oxen; since then a *few* of these useful creatures can plough a *small part* of our land, why should not a *great many* of them PLOUGH THE WHOLE?

* Provided a tax of five or ten pounds should be laid on every cart, waggon, or pleasure carriage wheel, drawn by horses, it would soon impede the revolution of these wheels. A licence might be had for the use of cart horses in the streets of London, or where absolutely necessary.

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It can be no man's interest to make a practice of monopolizing fish, or any perishable commodity; yet the public are great sufferers in this article, not because our fish is *boarded up*, but because we do not *catch* them.

I AM sorry that our fishermen do not find it so much their advantage to catch a *large* quantity of fish, which can be sold at a *moderate* rate; as to catch a small quantity, for which they are sure of a *high* price.

I WAS lately told at Southampton, that it was not uncommon for a man to catch twelve dozen of large whittings in two hours, which, at half a pound each, will weigh seventy-two pounds; now, suppose provisions with us were so plentiful that these fish were not wanted, and that therefore we should export them at only a halfpenny a-piece, then we shall find that one man, from two hours labour, will enrich his country six shillings*.

* Our seafaring men are now employed in carrying our guineas to France for oysters; we also buy the fish of the French that they take on our coasts; lately there were above fifty of their boats between Portsmouth and Plymouth, and, no doubt, there are as many now: thus first they catch our fish, and then make them good baits to catch our Money.

SUPPOSE,

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SUPPOSE, therefore, that in order to encourage our men to take *all* the fish they possibly can, we should give them a premium increasing in value according to the number or the weight of the fish; I venture to say, that this will have a better effect, and prove ultimately more to the real interest of the land-holder, as well as to the real interest of the community at large, than granting *bounties upon corn*; moreover, it will encourage the laborious, for then they will always be sure not only of a *certain*, but of a *profitable sale*.

BESIDES, the measure proposed would compel the idle to be industrious, because upon the plan of a premium, when they catch few fish, they will sell them but for little money, and lose the bounty granted by their country into the bargain. Every difficulty will cease when the fish are caught, because it will be very easy to construct ships that will bring fish of *any* kind which are caught upon our coasts, alive to London.

SUPPOSE every requisite for fishing was provided for our valuable failors, and that they were to be employed in catching fish; allowing them

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them an extraordinary encouragement, they would then, when required, be ready to fight; and if the fish they caught was exchanged for beef and other necessaries, it would prove a material assistance in victualling our ARMY, as well as our NAVY.

If twenty thousand foldiers, in time of peace, were employed in our various manufactories only four days a week, and each man should earn eighteen-pence per day; this, when added to the raw materials, reckoning them at one third of the labour in value, will amount to four hundred and sixteen thousand pounds *per annum*.

I SHALL finish this work with a hope that the reasons which I have already given, will prove sufficient to establish the various truths which I have asserted. Therefore I shall now summarily observe, that the use of oxen, a heavy tax on horses, or on wheel carriages that are drawn by them, encouragement to our fisheries, and a perpetual prohibition on the export of all our unstaple commodities, will speedily reduce the price of provisions, and, of course, the price of labour.—Then our various manufactories will regain their former vigour, and our people increase

crease in number. Then we shall work up the GOLDEN FLEECE, restore our credit, extend the commerce arising from our principal staples unrivalled throughout the world, and thus find ourselves in possession of PLENTY, RICHES, and POWER, the original gifts of nature to GREAT BRITAIN.

F I N I S.