From the Author

A LETTER

TO

THE EARL OF LAUDERDALE.

A

LETTER

TO

THE EARL OF LAUDERDALE,

TO SERVE

AS AN INDEX

TO

HIS LORDSHIP'S

LEGISLATIVE CHART.

"People rail at the seasons and crops, but I think its all along of them there folk, as things is so scarce."

See Mayor's Speech in 'The Nabob.'

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A LETTER

TO

THE EARL OF LAUDERDALE.

My Lord,

I take the liberty of addressing you in your quality of Geographer to the Landed Interest. Not content with the surprise your Speech of the last Session had created among those who were acquainted with the acuteness of your Lordship's mind, and your knowledge of the Science of Political Economy, you have embodied the ideas of that speech in the shape of a paradoxical chart. What a deal of talk this new map has given rise to! how it adorns the penetralia of country gentlemen! from the chimney-piece at Boodle's, to Sir Thomas Lethbridge's nursery-walls! Under your able pilotage, the infant Squire is taught to wander through the mazes of high prices and low prices, and at the end of his peregrinations, with rapture, to behold the curious coincidence of Government restrictions, with a cheap and steady supply of the necessaries of life, while his young mind

recoils with horror from the misery, dearness, starvation, and insecurity, attendant upon free trade! How usefully adapted to all ages! to the puling infant it might illustrate, "here we go up, and here we go down," the nursery ballad of the wisdom of his ancestors (if such violent charges can be allowed in Squires' nurseries); with the schoolboy at the landed establishment of Eton, it might displace the maps of Asia minor, which now occupy his undivided attention in the Remove, while, during the holidays, he might spin round it with a te-to-tum for his little sisters, always stopping five turns when wheat was below 30s. But as if, my Lord, the maps, of which we thus get the knowledge from the habits of childhood, had been described merely to please the eye; if our zig-zag continent of Europe had been moulded into a more circular shape, we should have gained little useful knowledge of the real shape of land; so I fear, from your Lordship's chart, the young student is likely to gain but little insight into the real causes of price.

I have three ways, my Lord, of proving that your map is inefficient for the proof you wish it to establish.

1. That if it succeeded in proving, to the whole extent of its endeavour, that restriction had coincided with low steady price, during the period you have chosen, and free trade, with high fluctuating price, yet the argument from their coincidence is

too weak to prove their relation of cause and effect.

2. That the coincidence is by no means so remarkable as you have attempted to show it.

3. That there are other more remarkable concurrences which do stand in the relation of cause and effect, without resorting to the paradox broached by your Lordship.

When two facts coincide, there is no fallacy more common than for a shallow reasoner to call one of these facts, cause,—and the other, effect; taking care to place them in the relative position that suits his own argument. Thus, when Owen Glendower wishes to exalt his own birth, he boasts

"The earth did shake when I was born,
"The heavens were all on fire, the earth did tremble."

But Hotspur, though more famed for deeds than words, answers him most logically, by showing that other causes might have contributed to this effect:

"Oh, then the earth shook to see the heavens on fire;
"And not in fear of your nativity."

Is not, then, such a superficial mode of reasoning unworthy your Lordship's mind? and yet, my respect for your Lordship's acknowledged virtues prevents me supposing that you could be blinded by an interested motive. I shall, indeed, throughout the few lines I intend to address you, abstain from any vulgar allusions to the poverty of Scotch land, the probability of poor lands being thrown out of cultivation by free trade, &c. from the belief that such

causes cannot affect your Lordship's patriotic integrity, and the certainty that abuse can lend no aid to my argument. You have too deep an understanding of the human mind not to know the value of a fact in an argument—one isolated fact. You well know how pleased the noble House is which you are in the habit of addressing, when you say, "But, my Lords, I will now take leave of vague theory, and apply myself to the fact."—(Hear, hear!) But, my Lord, out of that learned assembly, what adult mind would be contented, when you told them, that two facts had happened the same day; and that, consequently, one of these facts necessarily occasioned the other?

If any member of Boodle's was told, that the walls were all wet the day His Royal Highness the Duke of York died, would he be stupid enough to believe, that the lamented death of His Royal Highness occasioned the humidity in the club room? or tell him that, whenever one of the Royal Family died, the same thing had happened, would he, even then, believe, that "universal nature did lament," and that the walls had wept for loyalty? But if he inquired, and found out that all the Royal Family, having very strong constitutions, had died in hard winters; and, that at the conclusion of such seasons, it was a notorious fact, that the wet which stood upon the walls was to be accounted for by chemical causes; or that there had been an immemorial custom, instituted by the

wisdom of their ancestors, always to wash the house upon a royal demise; or that the lighting an unusual number of fires, to enable the members to come and gaze at the early procession, occasioned the damp; or many other concurring facts that I might imagine; would he not be inclined to attribute the curious coincidence to any or all of these ordinary expositions, instead of exclusively to the most paradoxical of any?

Are you not, then, afraid, my Lord, that even among that enlightened class for whom you undertake geography, some one may arise less dull than the rest, who may attribute the fluctuations in the course marked by your chart to the variety of the seasons—the alterations in the population—the changes in the currency—the anxiety of the dealers—the ignorance of the landlords—the periods of war and peace—rather than to the least probable cause of any, for the cheapness of an article—namely, the diminution of its supply?

"No wonder they call this place Stony Stratford; for I never was so bitten by fleas any where as here," said the illogical traveller, and yet no less logical than your Lordship: for, like you, he found two concurrent facts, both of them true. The place was really called Stony Stratford; and I have no doubt that he was really bitten by fleas. From this he concluded that the place had been named, from the only eminence he knew it to possess. How then can your Lordship quarrel with this

gentleman's idea of cause and effect? All this supposes your Lordship's map to be perfect—and, I think, proves, that if it proves all it intends to prove, it yet proves nothing more than the sagacious traveller did in the story. But I have a still more serious attack to make upon your Lordship's charta paradoxa; and, for this purpose, laying the map upon the table, I propose to examine it line by line. The principal evidence against it, to whom I wish to draw your Lordship's attention, is Mr. Tooke, in his invaluable work upon High and Low Prices. With this publication by the side of your map, let us proceed, my Lord, to consider the difference of the Russia merchant and the agricultural Peer.

My second argument is, "That the coincidence is not so remarkable as you have attempted to prove it."

Your chart, my Lord, is headed by a declaration, that it is intended to open the eyes of the manufacturers and consumers of corn to their true interests; and, consequently, I suppose it means to show them that, by a protection to the interests of the landlords, they will obtain the cheapest and steadiest supply of corn. Such a Mercator's projection from you, my Lord, is noble on the face of it. You banish all interest—you do not come before the public, saying to the Government, as others do—I am a poor aristocrat, who depend upon the cultivation of land, and growth of corn, for my

carriages and horses; my French cooks and Italian confectioners; and all my comforts. For God's sake, protect me! or you will lose the inestimable blessing of your landed gentry, who are only kept alive by a monopoly of your provision-market; who are only kept in good health and good humour by filling your gaols with stout young poachers; and only kept in their estates by giving them power to imprison anybody that comes near them. No, you discard all personal or political feelings. You say to the bread-eater, "It is for you I wish all this:—our interests are the same—you are the buyer, and I am the seller; but yet, my good friend, there is nothing in this world I have so much at heart, as to let you have my goods as cheap as ever I can; and, therefore, let me assure you, the only way to do this, is to allow me to be the only person who ever offers you any thing for sale; and depend upon it, I shall always do it cheaper than if you went about asking all the tradesmen in the market, who would give it you for the least money." If one of your countrymen, who came from further North than yourself, my Lord, were to offer you so fairly, would you give implicit reliance to him? or is it only for us, Southerns, that such proffers are fit?

The next line is also in capital letters at the head of your chart. I do not think these capitals were necessary, my Lord: such is the diffusion of education now, that most landlords read running

hand; and, if it was meant to catch the eye, is not that of the consumer as quick as the grower of corn? Let us see why it should be hidden from the former.—The first half of your Map contains the period when "the policy of the Legislature of this country was to rely on the encouragement to our internal agriculture as the best means of securing a steady increasing supply of grain;" and you explain this to mean, from the statute of 22nd Charles II. (the squire's *beau idéal* of legislation) to 1764, when the importation of corn was allowed by proclamation, and the exportation forbidden, by annual Acts of Parliament, for nine years. After this explanation, the reader is naturally surprised to find that your chart does not begin till 1700; but this is afterwards accounted for by your Lordship, and will be more fully accounted for by me, with the assistance of Mr. Tooke, when I come to consider the under-lines of the chart. The second half contains the period when "the policy of the Legislature of this country was to rely, *more or less*, on an increased supply of grain from abroad;" and it must be confessed, that when the eye glances down upon the whole, joined together, it is astonished at the low regularity of the line in the first period, and the peaks and mountains, hill and dale, up and down, traversed in the second. But, if the courage is not quelled by this scale of mountainous prices, let us examine

this period of *more or less* supply from abroad. From 1764 to 1774, the first ten years of the period, your Lordship seems to consider the trade as perfectly free, and yet a reference to the annual Act your Lordship enumerates, shows us that the Act of 22nd Charles II. was still on the Book, though suspended by an interference of the Legislature every year. Now, as regards foreign importation, there cannot be a more uncertain state than this: unless it is known abroad that we are dependant upon their supply, in bad seasons, would any merchant, in his senses, take the trouble of conveying corn from the Baltic, or from the Mediterranean, or America, to England, with the risk of finding its sale prohibited on its arrival? —Anxious and nervous as such speculators are known to be, is it probable that any portion of land on the Continent would be devoted, by its lazy proprietors, to the growth of corn for the supply of a country which would reject their offers when they had ruined themselves to make them? Such an existing law, with such a deviation from it, might enable us to profit occasionally by the superabundance of neighbouring foreign markets; but what hope could we entertain of a steady supply from such a hazardous speculation? In 1773, the law was altered to a small fixed duty at 48*s.*, and a bounty on exportation under 44*s.*; and, if I were inclined to adopt your Lordship's mode of argument, I might here say, "See my

knowledge of the foreign merchants' speculations proved; for, by your own table, more corn was imported in the next five years than in the last:" but I am ready to admit that other causes might have produced this effect. In 1791, this duty was raised, and the price of corn rose till 1795, when we certainly arrive at the most curious coincidence in your Lordship's chart, in favour of your argument:—hitherto the policy having been to depend *less and less* upon the supply of foreign corn, in 1795 it is, on a sudden, reversed, and a bounty given on the importation. In the account of these years of importation, there is an inaccuracy, however, which I shall attribute merely to negligence, as I before promised. The bounty of 1795 was only for that year, and though the importation was allowed duty free, no bounty was again given till the winter that ended 1799 and began 1800. Your Lordship's map would show that, from 1796 to 1798, the price of wheat fell from 83*s.* to 54*s.*, and it is exactly these two years that would best demonstrate the principle of free trade, if your Lordship's mode of argument was allowable; for, though the Act of admission was only for a limited time, yet there was no suspended Act of complete exclusion ready to thwart the speculations of the foreign merchant in years of abundance, as in the period from 1764 to 1774.

Yet, my Lord, I will allow, candidly, that

the six years, from 1795 to 1801, do prove your theory, as far as such a paradox can be proved by such an argument. During all these five years, there was as great fluctuation, and, during the three last, as high a price, as ever existed in this country. During these years, the country must have been distressed beyond measure; and, during these years, they gave a premium against the landlords, which no political economist could defend. But, need I again repeat, my Lord, that this single coincidence proves nothing?—need I remind your Lordship of the extraordinary scarcity of these seasons—of the long war that was just beginning, with every prospect of duration, from the dread of the French Revolution? But, for the moment, I will leave your Lordship to exult in these five years of famine and free trade;—yet, if free trade be the cause of scarcity, how comes it, my Lord, that, in 1802, the price fell from 125*s.* to 67*s.*, and there remained till 1804; when, on the imposition of a duty by a new law, it continued rising, till it again reached 125*s.*? This brings us within a year of 1814, the period of the turbulent discussions of the Corn Laws, within the memory of most of my readers. From then till 1826, a period of twelve years, it is curious to observe that, not once is the average price the same for two years together, and only once is it in the same square of your Lordship's map. The mention of these squares makes me

halt a moment in my inquiry as to the conclusions to be drawn from your map, to compliment your Lordship upon the admirable arrangement of it, and to thank you for its great utility, even to those who make use of it to arrive at different results from its Author's.

I hope, by this time, that I have convinced your Lordship that the coincidence your chart is meant to illustrate, is not so remarkable as you supposed, even if it could be accounted for no otherwise than by the paradox with which you have entertained the public. But, perhaps, you are surprised that I have confined my observations hitherto to the second half of your chart. Let me now give your Lordship my reason. It is, that in the first part of this chart I think you have made the greatest *mistake* of all your mistakes. In the explanation, the reading part of your chart, you have carefully altered the value of money in the last century to its value in this, by which you have raised the price of 53*s.* to 125*s.* Not so in the illustrative part of the chart itself; there you have confined the deviations of your line to the low regions of the ancient value; there you have *forgotten* to take notice of the change from the quarter of eight bushels to the quarter of nine; and this may, perhaps, my Lord, when you are reminded of the negligence, account to you for the extraordinary difference in the height of your course through the first and last half of your chart.

As 53 : 125 :: 67 : 156, to which height your chart does not rise—to which height, however, corn must have risen in 1709 and 1710, had your Lordship's attention been directed to the difference in the value of money, as well in the chart itself as in its explanation. What a difference this mistake has made to the eye of the consumer! for though, as your Lordship justly observes, steadiness of price is the desideratum both for buyer and seller, still you cannot deny, that the difference of the scale of price is one of the most striking results of the comparison of the two halves of your chart. Indeed, it is only for the last thirty years that the fluctuation in the last half is excessive; for, from 1765 to 1795, I believe, the narrowest inspection could not discover a greater fluctuation in your line, than from 1700 to 1765. Certainly, during the ten years which you call the perfection of free trade, the price was less varied than in the preceding decad, from 1755 to 1765, during which period, the line rises and falls between lat. 20 and 60; while, in the times of freedom, it is confined between 60 and 40.

One glance at the united halves, my Lord, and I will cease to trouble you with my own observations; and rely, henceforward, on the evidence of Mr. Tooke, who, I am ashamed to say, has, as yet, laid unopened on my table.

Upon the first *coup d'œil* at the line in your Lordship's map, the Squire's eye, following the zigzag of your course, makes him imagine, that the

Legislature held a course of policy as crooked as this; and that, whenever the line sinks, it sinks with a duty; and whenever it rises, it rises with freedom. If he rests satisfied with the pleasing and prejudiced delusion, deep and dismal is his ignorance; but no blame to your Lordship, for, in small letters at the top, you have told him that, during the whole of the first sixty-five years, "the price of grain continued to diminish in an average number of years, whilst the *only* legislative measure was suspending exportation in the years 1709, 1741, and 1757, and permitting importation, for a short time, duty free, in 1757, by the 30th Geo. II. c. 1."

To examine the first assertion, let us take the average of the first ten years—we find it to be 34*s.* from 1700 to 1709, including the last year at the extraordinary price of 69*s.*; the highest of any during the first period of your chart. In the last ten years, from 1755 to 1764, we find the average to be 37*s.*, though they were all ordinary years. Is this what your Lordship promised us? or how do you account for the difference of the explanation and the line of your map? Is it, that your Lordship depends upon the indolence and ignorance of your readers, that they should only look at one at a time, like the Oxonian, who boasted of having read Euclid without being childish enough to look at the cuts? or is your Lordship, yourself, under some error of political arithmetic? But, instead of taking an equal number of years from the

end and the beginning, your Lordship has thought proper, either to pick out the years best fitted for your purpose, or has *accidentally* hit upon the thirty-five last years, and the thirty first years. Now, it so happens (though of course your Lordship did not observe it), that the five middle years are the very lowest of the whole line, and these you have thrown into the balance of the half where you wished to make out the least average. Had you divided the period exactly, still you would have got what you wanted, a bare increase in the average; but, not content with this, you have procured yourself a handsome majority, by boldly assuming an unequal division. But does this prove a diminishing average the longer the law lasted? which is the consequence you announce in your exposition of your chart? Would not that be much better proved by comparing the first and last ten years as I have done? for upon an average of one-half with the other, it might happen, that the scale of progress in each half might be from minus to plus, though the result of the whole should be from plus to minus.

Surely, my Lord, it is most trivial, and unworthy even of the weak fraternity of arguments that adorn the margin of your Lordship's map, to make the whole legislation of the necessaries of life depend upon an accidental difference of 2*s.* per quarter, during a period of thirty years.

Again, in the second half of your chart, where you have also taken an inexact division, you say:

"It appears also, that the price of wheat increased, as well as the quantity of grain imported, the longer this system was persevered in; for the price of wheat, on an average of thirty-one years, from 1765 to 1795 inclusive, was 50*s.* 7½*d.* per quarter, and the annual average of imports over exports, was 402,518 quarters; whilst on an average of twenty-nine years, from 1796 *(when a bounty on importation was first granted)* to 1824 inclusive, it rose to 86*s.* 1*d.*, and the average annual excess of grain imported, over grain exported, was 1,511,473 quarters." The excess of import over export I dismiss—it is no argument. It only shows the fact of dependence on foreign supply—it does not prove the evil—and is here only brought forward to raise the passions of the phrenzied landlord, as he peruses your Lordship's map; like the cunning stable-keeper, who rattles the corn sieve as the racer approaches the goal.

But how will this same landed gentleman understand the bracketed sentence—*(when a bounty on importation was first granted)?* why, as any plain dealer would; he will understand it to imply, that the bounty lasted during the whole twenty-nine years. Was this the case? Did you not know it not to be the case? The bounty lasted till 1802, missing 1797, 1798, a period of five years; and, during the last twenty-four years, no man has ever dreamed of a bounty; the whole country would have been up in arms; the squire would have

called him poacher; the parson would have dubbed him atheist; the peer would have christened him radical; and the Earl of Lauderdale would have abused him as a new-fangled theoretical Canningite.

Be sparing, my Lord, of the hasty expressions of speech in others, when you see to what errors your Lordship's hurry in writing leads. Let me now put my promised query. Why, my Lord, did you depart from your first purpose, and commence your map at 1700? because, you say, the office of Inspector of Customs was not appointed till 1697. At first, this reason savours of accuracy, and falls in with that love of round numbers of which your Lordship was aware, when you made your chart *teres atque rotunda* as it is; but is there no other reason? might not the notorious barrenness, and proverbial high price of the last eight years of the seventeenth century, have spoiled the smoothness of your line? have rendered unequal, high, and fluctuating, the steadiness with which it gently meanders through the first half of the map, and created an awkward and confused similarity with the devious precipitate course it pursues in the latter half? How completely this would have marred your Lordship's map! how disgusted would the eye have been with the sameness of the style! your Lordship would have been left as disconcerted as Miss Lydia Languish in the play—

"So there will be no elopement, after all."

No antithesis—no paradox—no curious coincidence to meet the eye—no obvious appeal to facts. The simple inclusion of that batch of years would have ruined one of the prettiest paradoxes, and marred one of the most curious charts in the world! Has your Lordship forgotten, or will your Lordship deny, the barrenness of the eight last years of the seventeenth century? Mr. Tooke's book lies open before me, at p. 230, second edition. Will your Lordship open at the same page, and take the trouble of perusing this enlightened author's references to the Farmer's Magazine, to Adam Smith, and to the contemporary authorities, for the accounts of these seasons, and the prices they produced, beginning at sixty, and increasing till further exportation was forbidden, in 1699; in which year your Lordship's scene opens, and discovers, in 1700, wheat at 35*s.* of the money and bushel of that day.

Never mind the delight of your friends at the judicious moment of raising the curtain—"*Se judice nemo nocens absolvitur.*" You and I, my Lord, have been behind the scenes; and know to what tricks the piece owes its success. Let us now proceed to examine its merits during the performance:—

Eight years of a price between -	20*s.* and 40*s.*
Two years between - - - - - -	50*s.* and 70*s.*
Twenty years between - - - - -	30*s.* and 50*s.*
Nine years between - - - - - -	20*s.* and 40*s.*
Seventeen years between - - -	20*s.* and 50*s.*
Eight years between - - - - -	20*s.* and 60*s.*

make the whole variation between 20*s.* and 70*s.* in the sixty-four years.

During this period, exportation was generally encouraged or allowed; which, though it could not diminish price, must diminish the fluctuation of price; and, although no political economist would encourage it by a bounty, without the bounty, he must concede that satisfaction to land-owners; for it is one-half of their bug-bear free trade.

The power, too, remained with the Legislature, and was exercised occasionally, of prohibiting exportation when prices were high, which also contributed to their steadiness. Even importation, duty free, took place in 1728 and 1729, of which your Lordship has taken no notice; and was allowed once, for a short time in one year (1756), according to your Lordship—for three successive years according to the statute-book—frequently, according to the Parliamentary Review (p. 690)—and so frequently as to show the absurdity, and, finally to cause the alteration of the law, according to Adam Smith, in the fifth chapter and fourth book of his "Wealth of Nations."

I cannot wind up this examination of the first half of the chart better, than by an observation of Mr. Tooke's:—"If the Legislature is to have the credit of the low range of prices, which is chiefly observable between 1700 and 1765, how happens it that a similar degree of cheapness should have prevailed in France during precisely

the same interval, as it appears to have done, by the statement of prices in the article 'Corn Laws and Corn Trade,' in the Supplement to the Encyclopædia Britannica?" Allow me also to recommend to your Lordship, as a hint for your next Address to the House of Lords, the speech quoted by Mr. Tooke (Appendix, No. I.) of M. le Caradeuc de la Chalotais, Procureur-General to the Parliament of Brittany, when he carried into Court the edict of July 1764, to be registered; beginning—"I have the honour to inform you of the most signal benefit with which his Majesty can gratify his people—a liberty to trade in corn."

In the second part of your Lordship's travels, for the first thirty years you but once wander out of the latitudes of 40 and 60.—So much for fluctuation up to the celebrated year 1795, when begins the period of seven years, during which I allow the coincidence you point out to be curious, and therefore reserve the refutation of its being the consequence of the cause you mention till the third part of my argument. After this period, came two years of high, but steady, price, under the same bounty on importation; and then comes the new duty, in 1804, and ten years of fluctuation; after which, the scene closes with the last law of absolute prohibition up to 80*s.*, and at a farthing under that point, absolute freedom of trade; during which period, the fluctuation, in such a map as your Lordship's, excites a smile,—in

the history of the hunger of our fellow-creatures, makes us melancholy and miserable. Fluctuation of price is the allowed evil. When was that fluctuation least, for the longest time?—during the period of free trade and trivial duty, from 1764 to 1794. When greatest, during the longest period?—during the existing Corn Laws. Is this the result proposed by your Lordship's map? Can your Lordship deny that it is the result arrived at? Are not the conclusions, that an intelligent unprejudiced mind would arrive at from this map, exactly the contrary to what your Lordship's intelligent mind has arrived at?

Would not such a mind, entrusted with the power of legislation, prefer any law to the present law? Does not your Lordship obstinately prefer the present law? Such are the queries with which I shall end my second argument, thinking that I have shown the coincidences of your chart to be neither numerous, nor wonderful, nor even historical. I have now left, for my third argument, to prove that the *only one* that merits either epithet, can be better accounted for by other causes than by your Lordship's paradox; but, before I enter upon this detail, allow me to ask your Lordship one question, *ad hominem*.

Would you, as a land-owner, prefer the enormous gains, during the last half of your chart, made by the class to which you belong, or return to the barren lands which they possessed during the first half?

3. That there are other more remarkable concurrences which do stand in the relation of cause and effect, without resorting to the paradox broached by your Lordship.

My Lord, if your patience and candour have borne with me thus far, you will perceive that I have confined myself, in my criticisms on your chart, to the statements yourself has made; all the while presuming them to be correct:—if they are not so, it is from the public that both you and I must ask pardon. I now come to a part of my argument in which it will be necessary, if not to contradict your statements, at least to reverse the relation in which they stand. Here begins the detail of my argument;—here, in attacking your accuracy, I begin to tremble for my own: but I approach the question as a critic, not as a partisan; if I fall into error, it is the error of those I consult; it is not the mist that obscures my vision, but the hand-post that misdirects my way. Your Lordship has set me the example of industry, and what cause can ever excite us, if we will not labour for our bread?

First, then, you have mistaken the cause for the effect.

Secondly,—The fluctuation of prices was caused by the seasons.

Thirdly,—It was caused by the currency.

Fourthly,—It was caused by the difference of population, and the chapter of accidents.

When I have proved these four heads, I shall think my third argument concluded—that other causes produced the consequence than that you mention; and I shall have nothing left but a farewell to your Lordship.

First, then, your Lordship's friend (and authority for your present purpose), Mr. Hume, has the following definitions of cause and effect, in his Essay on the Idea of Necessary Connexion:—"We may define a cause to be *an object followed by another, and where all the objects, similar to the first, are followed by objects similar to the second*; or, in other words, *where, if the first object had not been, the second never had existed.* The appearance of a cause always conveys the mind, by a customary transition, to the idea of the effect—of this also we have experience; we may, therefore, suitably to this experience, form another definition of cause, and call it *an object followed by another, and whose appearance always conveys the thought to that other.*"

Dr. Brown, a gentleman who was, or ought to have been, well known to you, in his volume on Cause and Effect, calls the former "the invariable antecedent of a change," and the latter, "the invariable consequent." None of these definitions are unimpeachable, I may say so with modesty, for these two wonderful men have confessed it themselves; but they both require antecedence, and perpetual antecedence, in the cause; and

consequence, and perpetual consequence, in the effect. I shall show that your Lordship's cause is never antecedent; and, after that, I need not labour the point that it is not *perpetually* so; although, if my object was to multiply convictions of your Lordship for false reasoning, I might waive the first objection after proof, in order to establish the second. I am the more particular in defining cause and effect, because this is an old blunder of your Lordship's; for, in your Essay on Public Wealth, you say that consumption precedes production: no wonder, then, that you now say, that laws to regulate price precede the knowledge of price.

In the middle of this dry dissertation, I will cheer your Lordship with a story; and, to make it more palatable to you, it shall be one of our highly-valued Foreign Secretary. Mr. Canning, when he was nothing but Mr. Canning (before he had attained the glory of praise from all rightly-thinking men, and of censure from your Lordship), attended the British Forum the evening of a debate on the conduct of the chairman. The discussion was a charge of embezzlement of the sixpenny duty upon admission of strangers. There were some philosophers, *new-fangled theorists* of that day, who were for free trade in declamation; others, practical men, persons who neither were, nor wished to be, wiser than their ancestors, upon whom experience had no effect, to whom time had taught no lessons, were

against innovation, and preferred debating *clausis foribus.* These gentlemen had little land, I dare say, but they were as unwilling to hear reason as those *terrarum domini* who coughed at Mr. Brougham the other night. Altercation began; from words came blows; chairs were hurled about, and carried conviction with them wherever they fell. "When the storm subsided to a calm," Mr. Canning proposed, "Henceforward that the chairs should be fixed, and the Chairman moveable." Now, my Lord, I introduce this story in order to propose a similar *vice versa* amendment in the constitution of your Lordship's understanding:—that, "henceforward, your Lordship's *conclusions* should be fixed, and your Lordship's *confusions* moveable."

The serious argument, my Lord, runs thus, if you will cast your eye once more upon your map.

The first interference of the Legislature is in 1709, prohibiting exportation. The Queen's Speech, December 1709, (see vol. v. p. 802, Parliamentary History,) recommends the high price of corn and distress of the country to the notice of the Commons. Exportation is prohibited, in consequence, in 1709 and 1710. The next year the price falls, and continues falling till 1712. Here, then, an Act unfavourable to the home-grower is antecedent to the cheapness of corn. The low price continues till 1728, during which time no Act passes; the old

law remained in force, and no corn was imported; not because it was prohibited, but, because it was not wanted; as I shall show when I describe the effects of the seasons. In 1728, the price rose to 48*s.* 3½*d.*; and, according to the "Inquiry into the prices of wheat, malt, and occasionally of other provisions, as sold in England, from 1000 to 1765," from which Mr. Tooke makes his quotations, in 1728:—"An Act passed, settling the Prices of imported Corn;" and, in 1729, "An Act relative to the Importation of Corn." I own the Parliamentary History and the Statute Book say nothing of these Acts, so that I cannot say what they were; but what their consequences were, the account of imports and exports shows us; the excess of the former being, in the first year, 70,639, and, in the last, 21,322. [*Vide* Compendium of Laws relative to Imports and Exports.—1827, Ridgway.] The fact of the importation proves, either that some such act, proclamation, or order in council was made; or, that corn had risen to that height at which, under the existing law, the foreigner was able to import. In the first case (as the price fell, till in 1731 it came to 23*s.* 8¼*d.*), this second interference, in favour of the consumer, for the mitigation of the existing agricultural law, was again antecedent to the fall of price, and consequent to the rise; and, therefore, may fairly be considered the effect of the rise and the cause of the fall. In the second case, the prohibitory law could certainly not be the cause of the price at all,

as it was, at the time, a dead letter. In 1740-41, we have again legislation for the consumer, consequent on high price, and antecedent to an immediate decline of price, in 1742. Your line is then steady till 1751, fluctuates till 1757, when it has again risen, and is driven down by three years of prohibited exportation, and permitted importation. This is the last act of legislation recorded in the first half of your Lordship's chart. I cannot imagine, that any person can be found sufficiently paradoxical (always excepting your Lordship) to suppose, that, in these three instances, when, in the same year, corn rose to the pinnacle of price to which it had been gradually ascending, and the Legislature interfered in favour of the buyer, upon which it immediately fell, and continued gradually falling; that legislative interference caused the high price that preceded it, and was caused by the low price that followed it. I shall, therefore, no longer dwell on this fact; but leave your Lordship to debate the point with Mrs. Malaprop, who talks of "all her ancestors that came after her, and all her posterity that went before her."

For the cause and effect of the ten next years, I refer your Lordship to the preambles of the annual Acts of Parliament; which, if they do not convince you that they were passed in consequence of high price, will, at least, have the usual weight of authority with you, for the wisdom of our ancestors thought so, and saith so.

The parliamentary history also of this time may be read with great interest, in relation to this subject, beginning with the King's Speech of Nov. 11th, 1766, in vol. xvi. (when Parliament was called together on purpose to consult on the high price of corn) down to the King's Speech of Nov. 6th, 1772, vol. xvii. p. 516, in which he still complains of the scarcity, and in consequence of which the Act of 13 Geo. III. c. 43, was passed. In the preamble to this Act, the annual Acts lately passed are noticed, and the necessity of regulating the imports and exports by a permanent law declared. This Act took effect from January 1774, at which time wheat was at 59*s.* 1¼*d.*, and continued in force till 1791, when wheat was at 49*s.* 4*d.*; at which period, we find the country gentlemen grown clamorous (see Parliamentary History), and a higher scale is enacted. What follows? —the price remains the same for two years, rises the third, and reaches 81*s.* 6*d.* in 1795. If, as your Lordship argues, the protection to agriculture caused low or steady price, why did it not again, in this instance, depress, instead of elevating, your line? The author of the celebrated Corn Tracts allows nine years for the effect of a country changing from importation to exportation. Surely, then, two will not be too much for the change from importation, with a duty of 6*d.* at 48*s.*, to importation, with a duty of 23*s.* 10*d.* at 50*s.*? If we allow so much time for the change to take place,

we have the law protecting internal agriculture exactly antecedent to a high and fluctuating price. Moreover, this high fluctuating price is again antecedent to the King's Speech of October 29th, 1795, and the cause of the law for bounties on importation, that passed in the winter of 1795–96, unless your Lordship still imagines that the Act passed in the winter, not only caused the high price in the preceding summer, but also the King's Speech in the preceding autumn. Well, my Lord, the bounty on importation had no effect upon price in 1796; but, as soon as the foreigner had time to grow corn, and enter the market, he brought down the price, in 1797, to 62*s.*, and, in 1798, to 54*s.*, just to the level of the year 1794, which preceded the imposition of the bounty. If ever cause and effect could be argued from a single palpable instance, it is this—1794, 54*s.*; 1795, 81*s.* 6*d.*; 1796, 80*s.* 3*d.*; 1797, 62*s.*; 1798, 54*s.*; are the prices in five given years. Was there any act of legislation in 1794 or 1795 to account for its rise?—None. Was there any in the last three years to account for its fall?—On December 24th, 1795, passed the Act giving the bounties on importation for a year; and, in the two next years, Acts were passed, prohibiting exportation and allowing importation, duty free, but without bounty; at the end of which two years, the price was reduced to its former level.

But I will delay no longer to meet the only coincidence of your chart—the single instance in which it might appear that importation caused a year's high price; and I shall endeavour to meet it as seriously as if the proposition did not fall to the ground by the attraction of its own absurdity,—as naturally as the apple that first arrested the attention of Sir Isaac Newton fell by its own gravitation. Cunning as you are, my Lord, you will find it hard to establish so astonishing a theory from a single fact; although, had you been in Newton's place, you would probably have inferred, from the fall of the apple, that the law of nature was, that it should rise. However tired you may be, my Lord, of waiting for my account of the high prices of these five years from other causes than your Lordship's, I see such glaring errors arise from your inaccuracy, that I am determined to be methodical, and shall, at the present moment, adopt another answer to your proposition.

Before we infer any consequence from a law, my Lord, it is of considerable importance to know when that law began to take effect. If you had attended to this, the public would have been spared the errors of your chart—"Mark how a plain tale will set you down:" A bounty on importation was allowed by 39th Geo. III. A. D. 1799, but how much was spent in this bounty?—£.16. Corn rose in spite of this tremendous outlay; but, in

1800, the new law began to be known; the foreigner received a bounty of £.44,836 upon his importation; in 1801 he received £.1,420,355. What followed?—In 1802, we find the line in your Lordship's map, descended from 128*s.* to 67*s.* Here, then, once more, is immense importation *antecedent* to immense decline of price; and, where your Lordship's line had excited our wonder, by the rise it made during laws made to prevent such rise, it now excites our ridicule; for we find *the law did not take effect!* What is it that ripens fruit in summer?—The sun. Then why not in winter?—Perhaps it is because it does not shine. Will your Lordship allow this reason; or, will you still retain your peculiar ideas of cause and effect?

Let us pass to 1804, when we see, by the Parliamentary Debates, that the effects of the importation had driven the landlords to despair; and the law of 1791 (for the bounty system had ceased during the last two years, and the law of 1791 was considered the permanent one, and is the only one alluded to in the debates of 1804), was changed to the still higher minimum importation price of 63*s.*, with a duty of 24*s.* 3*d.* Upon this, corn immediately rose in 1805; for there is this difference between a change from exportation to importation, or from a low to a high duty on importation. In the former case, some time must elapse before the

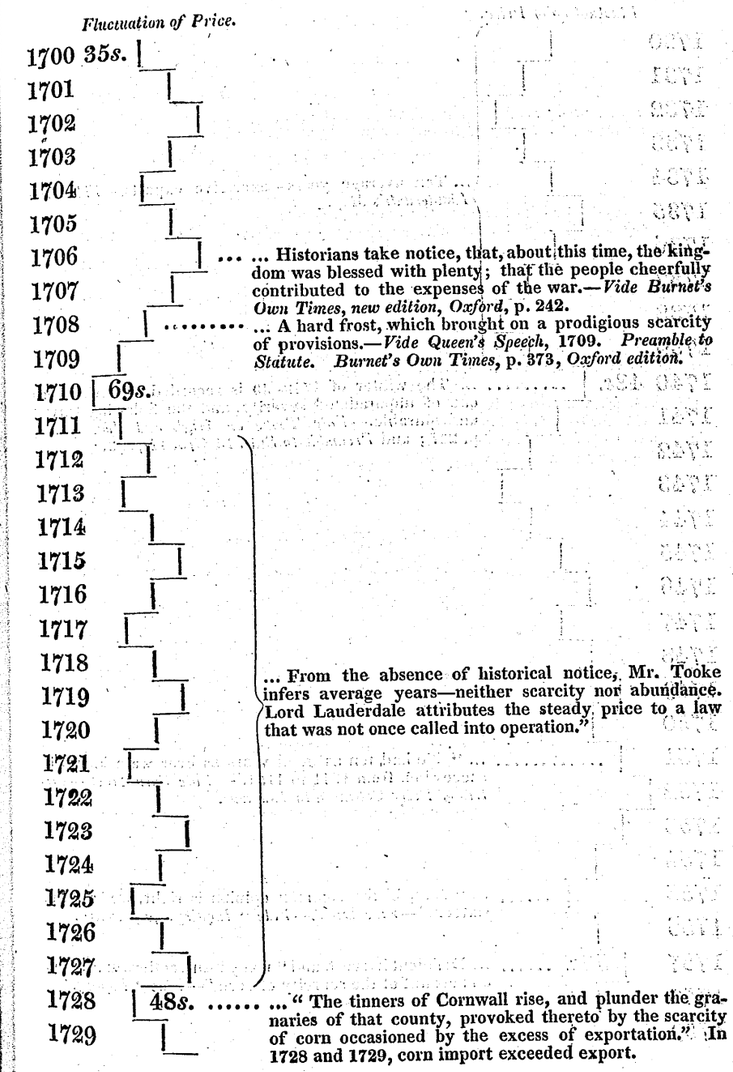
foreign speculator is aware, or secure of the market; in the latter case, a sudden diminution of supply occasions a struggle for what remains, and the rise of price is immediate. In 1806–7, the decline of price followed the large importation of 1805; after that it rose gradually, in spite of large importations, to 128*s.* in the year 1812, when the importations exceeding all previous importations of the last five years, and the law, passed in 1806, to unfetter the trade with Ireland, took effect, and reduced the price so low as to alarm the squires in 1814–15. How gradually this import from Ireland took place, the following numbers will show: 1807, 45,111 qrs.; 1808, 43,497 qrs.; 1809, 68,124 qrs.; 1810, 127,510 qrs.; 1811, 147,567 qrs.; 1812, 160,243 qrs.; 1813, 217,154 qrs. If your Lordship is inclined to persist in these importations being the cause of the high prices, instead of the effect, will your Lordship account for the fall in 1813, from 126*s.* to 85*s.*, in which year the importation exceeded the two preceding years? Again, in 1817, the high price followed the restriction in 1814 and 1815; and the decline, in 1819, followed the importation in 1817 and 1818, of 2,784,116 qrs. After this year, there was no importation (except from Ireland—a country, of which your Lordship takes as little notice as the rest of your Peers of Great Britain), wheat being below the restricted price, till 1825, in which year it rose to 84*s.*; and

your Lordship leaves us, in 1826, at 73*s.*, while at the present moment we are reduced to 53*s.*

I have now nearly concluded my office of critic, and here I cannot help expressing my exultation at a mis-statement that occurs at the very end of your Lordship's work. There is nothing so satisfactory as beginning or ending with a forcible word. "If you love me, Sir Lucius, let me begin with a Damme," says Bob Acres, when he is about to write a challenge; and I rejoice equally in winding up my critique with so damning a proof of inaccuracy as, that when your Lordship tells us that, from 1819 to 1824, there was an excess of importation of above one million, at the same time your line never rises to the importation price of 80*s.* Here, my Lord, were I, like the Anti-Catholic portion of the Cabinet, content to reject your solution without offering any of my own, my task would be complete; but, though I have only undertaken the office of critic, and do not intend to propose any measure of my own, or discuss any but your Lordship's, I think it as well, shortly to illustrate the connection between the effects of your chart, and other causes which account for them more easily than your Lordship's error; for, *Secondly*, the seasons will most amply account for them. As the best illustration of this, I have drawn up a table, which, if any person will take the trouble of comparing with your map, they may afterwards exercise their judg-

ment in selecting a cause. I do not envy the man his practical reason who decides for your Lordship. This table is chiefly extracted from Mr. Tooke, who, though his prejudice may be suspected, as that of any other person writing to prove his own theory may, yet has taken so much trouble to quote his authorities for facts, that we can hardly refuse credit to his testimony. In order to show the minute and constant effect of the Seasons, every year ought to be examined, and not the average taken of the Lady-day and Michaelmas prices in that year, but the Michaelmas and Lady-day following; for it is the price at Lady-day, for example, in 1710, that shows the effect of the harvest of 1709, better even than the Michaelmas price, before the result is completely known. The Lady-day price of 1709 is, of course, no illustration of the harvest of that year. This observation has been made by Sir E. West, and the consequence is, that his line of prices does not coincide, in one instance, with your Lordship's. So much for facts! I shall content myself, at present, with observing upon the most remarkable changes which your Lordship has attributed to such extraordinary causes.

Tooke quotes from an "Inquiry into the Price of Grain," &c.:—



Fluctuation of Price.

1730
1731
1732
1733
1734
1735
1736
1737
1738
1739

... Ten average years—excessive exports.—*Vide Lord Lauderdale's Map.*

1740 48*s.* .... The winter of 1739--40 is recorded as having been one of unparalleled severity, and the following harvest unfavourable.—*Vide Tooke on High and Low Prices*, p. 237; and *Preamble to Stat.* 14 *Geo. II.*, c. 3.

1741
1742
1743
1744
1745
1746
1747
1748
1749
1750
1751 .... "We had ten as good years as ever were known in succession, from 1741 to 1751."—*Vide Corn Tracts—Letters of Peter Collinson to Linnæus.*
1752
1753
1754
1755 .... "Nay, if the common opinion is right, we have had sixteen."—*Vide Ditto.—Vide "Inquiry, &c.," contrà.*
1756
1757 53*s.* .... Deficient harvest, and "many insurrections in England on account of the scarcity of corn."—*Vide "Inquiry."*
1758
1759

Fluctuation of Price.

1760
1761
1762 ... ... From 1757 to 1762 seem to have been favourable.—*Vide Collinson's Letters.—King's Speech.—Parliamentary History*, v. 15, p. 774.
1763
1764* 41*s.*
1765 48*s.* ... The king reminds Parliament of the high price of corn caused by the exportation of it.—*Vide King's Speech.*
1766
1767
1768
1769 ... Of the prevalence of a series of bad seasons, or, at least, of the very frequent recurrence of them in this country, and in a still greater degree, perhaps, in the rest of Europe, in the interval between 1765 and 1776, there can be no reasonable doubt.—*Vide Wealth of Nations*, vol. i. p. 310.—*Collinson's Letters.—Preambles to the Annual Acts.—King's Speeches, Parliamentary History.*
1770
1771
1772
1773 59*s.*
1774
1775
1776
1777
1778
1779 36*s.* ... ... "The ever-memorable year, 1779, when the crop was one-fourth above a medium crop.—*Vide Farmers' Magazine for* 1801, p. 139.—The exportation of this and the following year exceeded 400,000 qrs.
1780
1781
1782 .... The exports exceeded imports in the last seven years—an unfavourable harvest.
1783
1784
1785
1786
1787
1788
1789 .... A severe winter, followed by a backward spring.—*Vide Report of Committee of the Corporation of London.*

* The end of the first half of his Lordship's chart.

Fluctuation of Price.

1790		
1791		... The year 1791 was remarkably abundant, and the crop of wheat was much improved every-where.—*Vide Annals of Agriculture*, vol. xxiv. p. 321.
1792		... 1792 was the last year of any exportation of wheat from England.
1793		
1794		
1795		
1796	81*s.*	... 1794 failing produce. Excessive droughts in spring. Government purchased foreign wheat, and sold it at stated prices—highest price, January 1796.—*Vide Tooke*, 262.—*Annals of Agriculture*, vol. 24.—*Burke, Thoughts on Scarcity.—Annual Register,—and all the Histories of that day.*
1797		... 1797. Plentiful season, and immense importation.
1798		
1799		... 1799. From its commencement to its close, was, perhaps, as ungenial to the productions of the earth, and to the animal creation, as any upon record.—*Vide Appendix to Tooke, for contemporary History.*
1800		
1801	128*s.*	... 1800. Renewed scarcity. Alarm of the Legislature.—*Vide Parliamentary History.*
1802		... 1801. Favourable.—*Vide Farmers' Magazine.*
1803		... 1802—1803. Average seasons.
1804		... 1804. Prices lowered by importation. New Corn Bill.
1805		... 1805. Petitions against the Bill. Bill a dead letter.—*Vide Tooke*, p. 268.
1806		... 1806. Free intercourse with Ireland.
1807		... 1807—1808. Deficient. Distillation from grain forbidden.
1808		
1809		... 1809. Worse harvest. Year of the Walcheren sickness.
1810		... 1810—1811—1812. Deficient. Severe winter of the retreat from Moscow.
1811		
1812	128*s.*	... From 1793 to 1812, inclusive—eleven deficient, six average, three abundant.
1813		... 1813. Undoubted and general abundance.—*Vide Report of Corn Committee.*
1814		... 1814. Average. 1815. Abundant.
1815		
1816		... 1816. Cold backward spring. Wet summer and autumn.
1817	116*s.*	... 1817—1818. Good crops. 1819. Average.
1818		
1819		

Fluctuation of Price.

1820		... Undoubtedly abundant till January 1823, when the average was 39*s.*; the seasons were good; from 1812, one bad, three abundant, five fair.
1821		
1822		
1823		
1824		.....Mr. Tooke ends here.
1825		
1826	73*s.*	

I have, perhaps, not made this account of the seasons ample enough to satisfy your Lordship, but I only intend it as a hint for you to pursue the inquiry; if you mean to deny the inferences, I refer you to the third and fourth sections of the third part of the work of Mr. Tooke on High and Low Prices; a book which I consider, in point of clearness of statement, elaborate accuracy of detail, and admirable arrangement, to exceed in utility any volume that has ever appeared upon these subjects. I have repeatedly mentioned this book to you, because I am sure your Lordship would like to read it; to suppose you have ever seen it, and yet published this map, would be a libel, which I hope I am not impertinent enough to utter on any man's understanding. Mr. Tooke is too practical a philosopher to suppose the effects of a season to be immediate, as your Lordship imagines an act of the Legislature to take effect with the rapidity of a Divine mandate. He sees, too, and most ably explains, the effect of quantity on price, that it is not

the deficiency of one-half for instance, that doubles the price, but a much less deficiency, "owing to the struggle of every one to get his accustomed share of that which is necessary for his subsistence, and of which there is not enough, or so much as usual, for all;" and he argues most justly, "that it is of the utmost importance to bear in mind the operation of the principle of the great increase of price, beyond the degree of deficiency; with a view to accounting not only for the high range of prices, but likewise for the extraordinary prosperity which attended the agricultural interests, during two thirds of the period from 1791 to 1822." "By agricultural interest," he says, "I mean exclusively farmers and landlords, who are alone benefited by an advance of price resulting from scarcity. The condition of the labouring classes, even of those employed in husbandry, is well known to be deteriorated in periods of dearth, *as the wages of labour never rise in proportion to the advance in the price of provisions.*" I introduce this passage, to oppose your Lordship's insinuation in the explanation under your chart, that high price is beneficial to labourers—a favourite theory of landlords; containing about an equal portion of truth and charity. Thus stands the fact:—In agricultural labour, the high price of the article in whose production such labour is employed, increases the demand for it. Unluckily, in this country, the Poor Laws have established a warehouse for labour which is ready

to glut the market the moment any fresh stimulus demands it. The new speculations in which the cultivator of land engages, are performed by men who otherwise would have been supported by the parish (so that a double advantage accrues to the land-owner, he has less poor-rate to pay, and is enabled to cultivate more land). A very small addition may, perhaps, be made to the labourer's wages in consequence of an immense addition to the employer's gains, may-be even just enough to enable him to get the same quantity of bread at the high price as he did at the low; or he may, stimulated by high-sounding wages, work double tides to obtain higher pay; which your Lordship holds out as such an advantage to the landlord and consumer, at the same time that some of your countrymen are encouraging the education of the poor, as if it were possible for a man to toil all day like a beast, and read all night like a philosopher. Either of these changes in wages may assist him a little, and a really honest independent labourer (if the Poor Laws have left such a man in England) may prefer hard employment and wages, to breaking old stones, and parish relief; but it is a wretched delusion, to imagine that there is a certain quantity of labour, and a certain quantity of employment brought into the market, and that if the supply of labour is not equal to the demand, the wages of labour rise, and if it is greater, the wages fall; this is all very true, in a silk or cotton market,

but the labour market differs most materially in this; that there is always a glut of labour, no one who understands the principle of population—no one who has seen the effect of our uncharitable, and unchristian-like Poor Laws will deny it—there are always in this country too many men ready to take the mininum price of labour; especially in agriculture—where there are no strikes—no power of combination—where the whole power of subsistence is left to the mercy of their employer, who is only compelled to feed them for their labour, from the fear of being compelled to share the expense of their being fed without labour. The manufacturing labourer has the advantage of facility of combination, as far as it is, or ought to be, allowed; but then his employer has no increased stimulus, and has an increased expenditure from the high price of corn, so that, though the wages of labour may nominally rise to enable the labourer to eat as he did before, yet a great number of those engaged in it must be thrown out of employ.

My *third* way of accounting for the coincidences of your Lordship's chart was, by the alterations in the currency. On this head I shall be very brief, as I have no wish, at present, to entangle myself in the disputed theories of the currency; I shall merely point out the state of it at the most remarkable periods of fluctuation in your Lordship's line, the first of which is in 1709–10; in which years we learn from Burnet,

that public credit was very low, and money very scarce, having been remarkably plentiful in 1706. This being the only point of extraordinary rise in the first half of your chart, the rest will not require any additional causes to account for it.

The absence of information, and the wide differences of opinion entertained on this subject, will confine this part of my subject to the observation, that the great period of fluctuation in the currency corresponds exactly with that of fluctuation in the price of corn. The period of the greatest commercial distress, and scarcity of money and credit ever recollected, was in 1793 (*vide* Macpherson's Commerce, vol. 4, p. 266), when corn began to rise in price till it reached 81*s.* 6*d.* in 1795, and the Bank stopped payment in 1797, and did not resume it till 1819; during which period, the fluctuation of your Lordship's line is the most remarkable. I might elucidate this argument with another table of coincidences in the currency and the price of corn, which I should consider as cause and effect; but the disputes, both as regard fact and inference, are so manifold upon the question of currency; and your Lordship has held out such an awful warning to all rash young politicians of the absurdity of this mode of reasoning, that I shall content myself with what I have now said.

Fourthly,—The coincidences of your chart may be accounted for by the increase of population, and

the chapter of accidents. The increase of population will account only for the increased height of price. It would be nearly impossible to trace it so distinctly, with the inadequate information we possess, as to account for the fluctuations. The few instances where it may be striking, I shall range under the chapter of accidents; by which, I mean the wars, the occasional Acts, the speculations of the dealers, and that infinite variety of causes that imperceptibly affect the price of any article that is brought to market.

I need not dwell long upon the increase of population, considering that I speak to landlords who must be aware of the immense increase of Poor Rates, Inclosure Bills, houses and hovels in their neighbourhood, wherever they live.

Concerning the increase of Inclosure Bills, which at once bespeak increase of population and increase of production, a remarkable fact was stated by Mr. Peel, in his Speech of Friday, March 9th:—"That they amounted from 1688 to 1770 (which, bye-the-bye, he calls the period of restriction, therein including two-thirds of what your Lordship calls the ten years of freest trade), to 690; and, from 1774 to 1815, to 2,892."

Mr. Malthus thinks, that the tendency of population in England, from the last returns, is to double itself in fifty-five years. This would more than quadruple the population since 1700, while

the price of corn, without estimating the difference of money, is only doubled.

If your Lordship is inclined to deny this cause of increased consumption, I must devote another pamphlet to your conviction. If you argue, that it has been accompanied by an increased production, I say, then, you have no reason to complain. Whatever is the cause of the high prices of the last seventy years, it is very clear who has been the gainer by them.

Accident, certainly, is a cause to which, alone, I should be unwilling to attribute the effect; coupled with others, it may serve to show your Lordship how far the Legislature is from being the only cause of fluctuation in price. In war and peace, throughout your map we find the fluctuation nearly even, if we except the last long war, the twenty-three years of the greatest variation—a war unparalleled in history, for the enemy with whom we contended abroad, and the waste and debt with which we were hampered at home. This war was an accident that might form a chapter of itself—a cause to which many persons attribute the whole fluctuation of price in the period. In this very war, how many inferior accidents contributed to the fluctuation of price. It begun in 1793; under what formidable auspices? The dread entertained, at the time, of the French Revolution and its principles, unsettled every thing, and price among the rest. In 1808,

the whole ports of Europe were blockaded against us; the distillation from grain was prohibited (a favourite measure with English ministry in times of distress); the sapient decision of gentlemen upon the amount of wheat they would consume in their families; the frequent interference of Government in purchasing large quantities of corn to anticipate bad seasons (as in Mr. Pitt's famous seizure of neutral cargoes in 1792); the anxiety created by such prospects; all these causes contributed to the fluctuation of price, and an accurate detail of them would be a valuable lesson to your Lordship; but, I fear, the public are already tired of convictions, and, prejudiced by their own laws, cannot bear to see you so often tried for the same crime. That any one may see, and judge of, the charges I have preferred against you, I will here recapitulate the list of your Lordship's errors.

1. That you have misled the public, by stating your chart to be an examination of the period from 22nd Charles II. to 5th Geo. III., and from 5th Geo. III. to the present day; whereas, your line of prices does not begin till 1700; by which means you exclude the years of highest price during the first period.

2. That you call the first half of your chart "the period during which the Legislature depended on encouragement to our internal agriculture;" whereas, the truth is, that internal agriculture had

not so much encouragement from the Legislature in this half, as in the last most fluctuating quarter of your map; not even from the existing law, from which the deviations were so frequent as for Adam Smith to contend, that the law must have been bad which was so constantly suspended.

3. That you have allowed for the altered value of money in the reading part of your map and not in the illustrative line.

4. That you have said, "the longer the protecting system was persevered in, the cheaper and steadier became the supply of corn;" whereas, the years from 1755 to 1764 average higher than from 1700 to 1709, and fluctuate more.

5. That you have divided the period unequally to prove your assertion more strongly.

6. That your averages differ from those of Sir E. West, and the tables given by Mr. Tooke from Eton College.

7. That you have called the whole of the second period one of dependance on foreign supply, *more or less*; whereas, there were only seven years during which it was encouraged, and ten during which it was annually allowed by the suspension of the prohibitory law.

8. That you have given the public to understand that, for the last thirty years, there has been a bounty upon importation; whereas, it only lasted for the first five of that period.

9. That you have argued throughout, that,

wherever two facts happen in the same year, one must be the cause of the other; whereas, you might as well have said, that the sun shines because your Lordship takes snuff.—Also, that the fact that happens last is the cause of the one that happens first, which is putting the cart before the horse.

10. That, by a mis-statement of facts, and a misapprehension of logic, you have attempted to uphold a paradox opposed to common sense and the interests of mankind.

To explain the curious facts you have collected, I have shown:—

1. That the period of free trade is the steadiest period of your map; and, though the imports exceeded the exports, upon the whole quantity; for sixteen years out of thirty-one, the latter exceeded the former.

2. That the history of the seasons amply accounts for the variation of prices.

3. That the fluctuation in the currency accounts for the greatest fluctuation in price.

4. That the principle of population accounts for the period of high price.

5. That the accidents, of war, of the free intercourse with Ireland, of the various interferences of legislation, and all the causes that affect speculation in price, were at work most strongly during the period of the greatest fluctuation.

6. That a period of six variations in the legislation of price might be expected to occasion greater

variation in price than a period of uniform legislation.

7. That the period of agricultural prosperity has been the latter period; the same with the period of the greatest fluctuation, the allowed evil; and the period of legislation most similar to the first, to which your Lordship wishes to return.

In the course of this examination, my Lord, I have often been checked by the dislike of thwarting your Lordship's ingenuity; and, as I went along, I have been trying to discover some other theory upon which you might exercise it. Would it do to prove, that the end of a century was always high-priced, because the end of the seventeenth and the eighteenth was? It would be a pretty theory; but I fear no man would feel sufficient interest in its results to embrace it. Suppose you try Lord Malmesbury's idea, that cheap bread is the cause of poaching, and show, that the number of commitments, for the last century, always varied with the price of corn. This would be very plausible for us consumers, because, at least, we might get rid of the present midnight civil war, though at the expense of starvation; but then the country gentlemen would still struggle for that; they like keeping their homicide power, but they don't like losing their perdricide privileges. At length I have hit it, my Lord; at once, to please the starvers and the starved, will your Lordship make a map to prove, that corn has risen in proportion as conces-

sions have been made to the Roman Catholics? The coincidences must be numerous, if properly sought out. I see two already. In 1800 was the Union, when the promise was made of Emancipation, and then corn was at 125*s*. In 1812—oh, miracle!—a majority of 129 for Emancipation, in the Commons; and in that very year, wheat was at 129*s*. Is it possible to resist such evidence as this, in a land of Christian country gentlemen?

Farewell to your Lordship! but before you step into your carriage, to go down to the House of Lords, let me solemnly remind you for what purpose our Constitution sanctions that Assembly. To restrain, at once, anarchical fury in the multitude, and to curb despotic tyranny in the sovereign; thus is it supposed to blend together the warring principles of the three forms of government. Now, upon this corn question, the sovereign and the people are united. Who resists them? The House of Lords. For what purpose? Their own emolument. If practical philosophy allows the existence of a large body of men, at their leisure, to eat the bread that is made by the sweat of another man's brow, it is because it supposes such men to be better able to consult for the good of the public, and devote their time for the benefit of those who are devoting their toil for them. If philosophical legislature sanctions hereditary leisure, it is because she hopes that those who possess it will never forget from what state they derive it—will always bear in

mind, that their children may return to that state, and that their parents have risen from it.

Instead of this—instead of being the first to waive their conceded rights in favour of a starving people; if the Lords are the first to dispute upon the least tittle of infringement; nay more, to insist upon the continuance of their superfluity; the nobility of the Revolution is not the nobility of the present day; Philosophy withdraws her sanction from the institution; the cries of hunger are abetted by the dictates of reason, and the distinguishing features of the English Constitution become the scars and blemishes that disfigure its face.

Your's, &c.

My Lord,

A. B.

March 20, 1827.

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