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CONSIDERATIONS,

&c.

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CONSIDERATIONS

ON THE

PROTECTION

REQUIRED BY

BRITISH AGRICULTURE,

AND ON THE

INFLUENCE OF THE PRICE OF CORN

ON

EXPORTABLE PRODUCTIONS.

BY

WILLIAM JACOB, Esq. F. R. S.

LONDON:
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1814.

0363

ADVERTISEMENT.

WHEN I first determined on submitting the following considerations to the public, I intended to have added to them an Appendix, consisting of Tables from various documents, to show the accuracy of the facts on which my arguments are grounded; but I have since been induced to think, that the additional expence of the publication of such Tables would have been so great, as to have impeded, in a considerable degree, the circulation of the book.

It has become the less necessary, from the Reports of the two Corn Committees having been printed by a bookseller for general

use, and thereby becoming accessible to those who have not opportunities of inspecting Parliamentary papers. Most of my statements are founded on those Reports and their Appendices; and having extended my work beyond the limits originally projected, though I have aimed at brevity as much as was compatible with clearness, I hope the reader who has not seen the Reports alluded to, will give me credit for fidelity in my extracts from them.

W. J.

Chelsham Lodge, Surrey,
Dec. 20, 1814.

ERRATA *in a few copies.* P. 36, line 1. *read* consumers.—Ibid. *last line, omit* of.

By the same Author,

TRAVELS

IN THE

SOUTH OF SPAIN

in 1809 and 1810.

In one Volume, quarto, with plates.

0365

IT is an imperative duty on the Legislature of every Country to take all possible precautions, that the people subject to its government shall be abundantly supplied with all the necessaries for subsistence, and even with those articles of luxury, to the use of which they have been so long accustomed that they are rendered almost indispensible.

This principle, though generally admitted, has been diminished or limited in its operation by some persons who have applauded the good sense of the French merchants, who, when M. Colbert inquired if the government could render any service to commerce, only replied, "*Laissez nous faire*" (Let us alone.) This answer, in the circumstances of these gentlemen, may have been proper, and might

0366

be adopted even by us, if our various complicated interests were simplified, and our imposts reduced; but is ill calculated for the situation of a country which has risen to power and prosperity by legislative enactments, in direct opposition to this maxim.

No accurate observer of passing events can have failed to remark that the government of this Country, far from interfering prematurely or unnecessarily to form laws for regulating the interests of commerce and agriculture, has been rather slow to enact new, or to alter any existing statutes, until the investigation has been pressed upon its attention by the direct application of the parties interested; and it has been the language of many of those who have required alterations to serve the interests of some particular branch of commerce, that Government cared little or nothing for commerce. This language, most unjust as is the imputation it conveys, has been repeated by almost every party, who, eager to excite an interest equal to that which they felt for the success of their projects, have been disappointed when public men have not been influenced by their views,

and have required time to examine the plans proposed to them, in all their extent and all their bearings.

The stern resistance to innovation, which Mr. Burke has justly pronounced to be the characteristic of Englishmen, has by no conduct of the Government been more decidedly evinced, than by an unwillingness, till after due and deliberate enquiry into every new project, to alter the commercial laws of the country. The practice of letting alone things that are at rest, of moving no new projects, is as congenial to the habits of our Statesmen as it is to the natural indolence of the human race. The danger most to be apprehended, is, not that Government will unnecessarily or prematurely interfere, but that its habitual dislike of innovation, and love of ease, may render it tardy on some occasions which require prompt decision; and that thus the important interests of some parts of the community may be unnaturally depressed.

Without entering into any abstract reasoning upon the answer of the French merchants to M. Colbert, to show its futility as a general principle, or without exercising

our ingenuity to ascertain how far it is a good one, it may, perhaps, be more satisfactory to show in what degree the various manufacturing and commercial interests which have so much enlarged our trade and navigation, are indebted for their prosperity and extension, if not for their origin, to a course of conduct in direct opposition to this celebrated maxim.

Our woollen manufacture, the most ancient, and from being composed almost entirely of the produce of our own soil, the most valuable we possess, was early protected by the interference of the Legislature; which, in the 4th year of Edward the Third, prohibited the importation of foreign cloths; thus conferring on our own artisans a monopoly of the home market; and by the removal of all apprehension from foreign competition, giving a stimulus to domestic exertions, which produced a rapid improvement of our fabrics, and a gradual, but ultimately extensive increase in our means of supply; so that instead of fearing the competition of foreigners at home, we have been enabled to rival them even in their own countries.

As other branches of manufacture have been established in England, the Legislature has fostered them, by conferring upon them the exclusive monopoly of the domestic supply.

In the reign of William the Third, when our fabrics of silk were yet in their infancy, a law prohibited the consumption of silks made in India; and as our manufactures have improved, and become adequate to the supply, similar restrictions have been extended to silks from other countries; till at length every species manufactured in any foreign country has been prohibited in this kingdom.

Our linens have received similar protection from the Legislature; and though those of Great Britain and Ireland do not enjoy an absolute monopoly, yet the high duties imposed on the linens of Germany and Holland give to our own manufacturers all the advantages which such monopoly could afford, as far as regards the internal supply; and in the consumption of our colonies, the home manufacturers have the advantage of receiving a bounty, whilst the

foreign linens are charged with a duty, that nearly increases the price of most species to an equality with our own.

Our cotton manufactures, which have risen with astonishing rapidity to a degree of prosperity exceeding all previous calculation, have been early and carefully protected by the laws. The importation of India calicoes and muslins has been checked by excessive imposts upon all that are permitted to be consumed at home, and many articles are absolutely prohibited from being used within the United Kingdom.

The manufactures of iron have not been brought to their present flourishing condition, without being guarded by imposts and monopolies applied to foreign iron-ware. The importation of iron in its crude state, from Sweden and Russia, is indeed permitted, but subject to duties, which, whilst they admit its use where it is indispensible, prevent its being applied to the most general purposes; thus giving a decided superiority to the British iron-masters. In most of those articles made from iron, in which the skill and labour of the artisan are of more value than

the raw material, an absolute monopoly has been conferred on the home manufacturer. Our statute book beginning in the third year of Edward the Fourth, and enlarged in almost every subsequent reign to the present time, contains laws for excluding from our home consumption, nearly the whole of those articles of foreign workmanship, of which iron, and the other cheap metals, form the principal basis.

It would be difficult to point out among the numerous articles of British manufacture, any considerable one which has not been protected and stimulated by legislative exclusions and monopolies; and even the more minute ones have been early and constantly protected, as appears by laws passed in the reigns of Edward the Fourth, Richard the Third, and Elizabeth, prohibiting the introduction of foreign sadlery, cutlery, caps, glass, and numerous other articles.

It is not only in our manufactures, that the beneficial effect of restrictions has been felt, but in our navigation the same causes have not failed to produce similar results.

The law, so well known by the name of the Navigation Act, and which has been highly praised by that eminent writer hereafter to be noticed, is a monopoly of the most rigid kind in favour of British ship-builders, and British sailors; the restrictions it contains, never waved but in favour of the captors of enemies vessels in time of war, have been found by the experience of a century and a half so highly beneficial to the national interest, that this law has been considered by Statesmen of every party as a sort of Palladium; and the wildest votaries of theory and system have never recommended its repeal, though it is notorious that ships may be built cheaper than by British ship-builders, and navigated cheaper than by British seamen. The monopoly created by this celebrated law is almost as extensive in its effect as it is in the power of the Legislature to make it. Unless a ship be British-built, and unless the master and two-thirds of the mariners are British subjects, she is not permitted to trade from one port to another in these islands; nor are any other vessels allowed to trade with our colonies, or even to bring to us the productions

of any other country except of that in which such vessels were built.

By subsequent laws the produce of the fisheries is either prohibited to be brought here by foreigners, or, if brought, is subject to such heavy imposts, as almost amount to a prohibition; and no one doubts that, by the restrictions applied to this branch of industry, we have been enabled to exceed the French in the Newfoundland, the Dutch in the Greenland, and the Americans in the Spermaceti or Southern whale fishery.

In our colonial regulations, from the earliest period of our possessing colonies, we have adopted, and hitherto adhered to, the system of restrictive protection.

The West India Islands, whose productions have been the means of creating our commercial navy, whose consumption of our domestic fabrics has given such a stimulus to our manufacturing exertions, and whose valuable commodities form a basis for our revenue, have been cultivated and brought to their present state, by possessing a monopoly of British consumption, as far as regards their most important productions; for though

East India sugar may be imported, it is charged with so heavy a duty as almost to create a prohibition, and accordingly the consumption of it is very trifling.

Thus, whilst a monopoly of British consumption has been yielded to our West India Islands, the manufacturers, ship owners, and merchants of the mother country, have enjoyed the advantage of similar restrictions to the total exclusion of all foreigners.

The whole of our trade with the East Indies is a monopoly of a very rigid kind; and the *implicit* disciples of Adam Smith have usually exercised upon it all the abuse and raillery that injustice and oppression could have merited; but after the full and fair investigation which the whole system of India has lately received in Parliament, after the opponents of the Company having, as the investigation proceeded, become less vehement in their opposition, and after the Legislature has, with fewer dissenting voices than any great measure usually receives, enacted the continuance of the system, with but some trifling concessions, it is but fair to presume, that the monopoly is attended

with more advantages, and fewer evils, than a system of unrestrained commerce.

It would carry the reader far from the object of the present essay, to enter into a discussion of the Indian and Chinese monopoly; but not to have noticed it at all in this review of the great interests of the country, might have been attributed to a consciousness of defect in the system, which the writer is far from feeling.

After this cursory review of the actual policy of this country for a long series of years, it might be deemed sufficient to pass to the principal subject of this essay, without adverting to the opinions of some of our political economists, who appear to have been misled by theory, to the total neglect of the results which have followed from our existing practice.

The name and opinions of Adam Smith have deservedly too great weight in the public estimation to admit of any writer treating them with neglect or contempt; but whilst it must be cheerfully allowed, that on every subject to which he has directed his attention, he has thrown a degree of light which only

acuteness, reflection, and industry like his, could have bestowed; it may be contended, that on the subject of restraints on importation, and on bounties, (Book 4th, Chap. 3 and 5) there is more obscurity, and more inaccurate phraseology, than in any other part of his work. As the Earl of Lauderdale, in his Letter on the Corn Laws, has most successfully pointed out the fallacy of his reasoning, it may be the less necessary to advert to it; but it may deserve consideration, that this country is arrived at a state, which neither Smith, nor any man, at the time he wrote, could have contemplated. Our national debt of one hundred millions, our revenue of about ten millions, and our expenditure of nearly the same amount, have increased sevenfold, our coin has disappeared, the exchanges with almost every part of the world have been extremely unfavourable, and till very lately we were excluded from every port on the Continent. Has not this singular and unprecedented state of affairs been productive of reasonings and calculations in political economy, very different from any which that celebrated writer could have formed?

Can we now be guided by principles deduced from a state of affairs such as that which existed in 1773 before the first war with America, the Revolutions of France, or before the late Continental System had been created? What would have been our situation had we, during the existence and operation (slight as the actual operation was) of the Berlin and Milan decrees, acted upon the principles of Adam Smith?

A writer without the affectation of ingenuity certainly might, from the concessions made by Adam Smith, show that restrictions on commerce, and even monopolies, can be defended by his authority. He allows that where taxes are levied on any domestic production, it is but justice that those who produce such articles, should be secured from foreign competition, by equivalent taxes being laid on the same articles of foreign growth. Now, as it can be shewn, that the land-tax, the property tax, the poor rates, the tithes, the horse duty, and some others, are direct taxes on the productions of the land, it must be conceded by his most implicit followers, that a duty equivalent to those taxes should

be laid on such foreign commodities as come in competition with our own agricultural produce; and it may be contended that a great proportion of the indirect taxes fall on the productions of the land, and to that amount the duties on foreign articles of the same nature ought in justice to be extended.

Instead, however, of abstract reasoning, it will be more consistent with the plan intended to be pursued, to proceed at once to the consideration of our demand for subsistence; and, when we have ascertained the extent of that demand, to consider the most uniform and certain means for its supply.

Enquiries into the wants and supplies of a great country are attended with peculiar difficulties; and after the most careful investigation of all the facts that can be ascertained on such subjects, it is seldom that strict accuracy can be attained; the student in political arithmetic can only hope for such an approximation to exactness, as may prevent any very fallacious views of the subject; and even if he be very diligent, he will still be suspicious of his own calculations, and diffident of his own results.

A considerable approach has been made towards perfect accuracy on one of the most important of these subjects, by the population tables collected under the authority of the Legislature in 1801 and 1811, and the results show the fallacy of all preceding calculations on that interesting subject, the amount of our population; we now smile at the errors of Brackenridge and Templeman, and our surprise is excited at the mutual asperities of Price and Howlett, who in all their calculations so much underrated the number of the inhabitants of this Kingdom.

The truth being ascertained on one branch of political arithmetic, will greatly assist us to avoid the errors of former writers on the other branches of the subject. Considerable assistance in political arithmetic has also been afforded by the reports to the Board of Agriculture; by Sir John Sinclair, whose laudable enquiries have been well answered by the Clergy of Scotland; and by the various evidence which the diligence of Parliament has collected and produced in its numerous reports; from these and other

0373

sources, a degree of information has been collected, which has increased and rendered more accurate the knowledge of the political arithmetic of our own country, though we must still rely with much hesitation upon some of our calculations.

With such data as we possess, we may attempt to estimate, without fear of any material error, the demand for subsistence which the increase of our population creates.

It appears by "the comparative statement of the population of Great Britain," laid before Parliament in January 1812, that the inhabitants of this Island, since the enumeration in 1801, have increased 1,611,882 (being a greater number than the whole population of Scotland amounted to ten years before) and were in 1811, 12,552,144.

This great body of human beings is accustomed to live with a degree of comfort, which is not enjoyed by the corresponding ranks of society in any other country, and which was unknown to our ancestors in every preceding age. Of those who subsist by their labour, in this country, with the exception of the northern parts of the Island,

almost every one is fed with wheaten bread, and that generally of the finest quality, whilst in the north and east of Europe the same class is generally fed on rye or barley, in the south on chesnuts, maize and fruits, and in Asia and Africa on rice or maize. It is well known, that till within a few years the working class of people in England usually subsisted on barley bread; and the gradual improvement of their situation, by which every humane man must be gratified, has continued for so short a time, that persons arrived at middle age can remember, when in country villages in the south of England, barley was as generally eaten by the peasantry, as wheat is at this time.

In estimating the quantity of provisions, and the means of supply necessary for a given number of people, the mode in which they live is of considerable importance; not because an equal quantity of land will not subsist as many persons upon wheat, as upon barley or oats, but because the former grain, having a tendency to exhaust the soil more than the latter, cannot be made to recur so

frequently in the course of cultivation on the same spot.

It has been usual to calculate, that each individual in this country consumes annually one quarter of wheat, and it may be presumed that this computation is just, from the fact that the Magistrates, in allotting the rates of parish allowance to the poor, generally fix them at the price of two quartern loaves per week, for each individual in a family; and, as the sack of flour of 5 bushels (which is the produce of from $6\frac{1}{4}$ to $6\frac{1}{2}$ bushels of wheat) will make 84 quartern loaves, it follows that 104 quartern loaves must require a little more than a quarter of wheat of 8 bushels. As the allowance of the Magistrates is calculated for paupers, in the extreme of indigence, who are supposed to have no means of obtaining any sustenance but bread, it may be suggested that to calculate on each human being consuming an equal quantity of wheat, is rather extravagant; and it may be further urged, that in some of the northern counties of England, as well as in a great part of Scotland, the lower

classes of the inhabitants are generally fed on oaten bread.

To these objections it may be replied, that among the higher classes the quantity of flour consumed in pastry and confectionary, and that wasted by luxurious domestics, will probably make the average of their consumption amount annually to nearly a quarter of wheat for each member of a family; that the number of the poor who feed on oaten bread cannot exceed one million and a quarter, or a tenth of the whole number of the consumers of corn; and, as we have seen, that the allowance of two quartern loaves per week amounts to more than a quarter of wheat annually; the quantity consumed by the most numerous class, beyond the above calculations, will nearly compensate for the other sorts of food made use of by the smaller number. To this may be added, the quantity of wheat employed in the articles of starch, hair-powder, and paste.

A great variety of calculations might be made, to prove that this computation of a quarter of wheat for each individual in Great Britain (deducting one million and a quarter

for those who feed on oats) approximates as nearly to truth as is possible in such estimates; and as this calculation has been made by the most respectable authorities, and of late years contested by none, we may safely assume as a fact, that the annual consumption of wheat in Great Britain is 11,000,000 quarters.

It will occur to every reflecting person, that this estimate is made on an average of years, and that the quantity actually consumed is subject to some, though not very material, variations. In a season of great plenty, and consequently of low price, an allowance must be made for greater profusion; and in a year of scarcity, and consequent high price, for that more rigid system of economy which such seasons induce.

The consumption of wheat is not so much affected by variations in price as might at first appear probable: the most numerous class of the community, the largest consumers of wheat, who enjoy in seasons of plenty the luxuries of meat, tea, sugar, and spirits, are obliged in seasons of scarcity to abandon such indulgences, and subsist

almost wholly on bread. Among the higher classes, indeed, much parade and some practice of abstinence from the use of wheat has been adopted, in times of scarcity, but probably what has been saved by them, has been balanced by many, who in other times, had occasionally meat for their humble meals, but in a season of dearth, have been obliged to confine themselves almost entirely to bread.

To the quantity of wheat thus required for subsistence, an addition must be made for a demand equally indispensable; to produce 11,000,000 quarters of wheat, according to all former estimates, about 4,000,000 acres of land must be annually sown; and the quantity of seed requisite for this extent of land, reckoned at two bushels and three quarters to an acre, which may be considered a fair average of the sowings (taking the heavy and poor lands which require more, and the better cultivated lands, or where the drill system is practised, which require less seed) will amount to about 1,400,000 quarters. We may thus fairly assume, that the quantity of wheat wanted for the consump-

tion of Great Britain, is twelve million four hundred thousand quarters annually.

It is much more difficult to approach to accuracy, in calculating the quantity of oats required for the supply of this Kingdom. The principal consumption of this grain, is as food for horses, excepting in a small portion of the most northern part of England, and a great part of Scotland, where about 1,250,000, or a tenth of the population of the whole island, may probably be fed on oats in different forms.

The number of horses kept in England and Wales, as nearly as can be ascertained, is 1,975,981, and in Scotland, 243,489, which in the whole Kingdom, may be stated at about 2,200,000.

The common allowance for agricultural horses, as they are kept by the best farmers, is two bushels a week for each horse, which is 13 quarters annually; but as the excellent practice of soiling during the summer months prevails very extensively, though not universally, a saving of three quarters for each horse is occasioned, wherever that mode is adopted.

Horses kept by gentlemen, by stage coach and post masters, by carmen, brewers, coal merchants, and others, in the great towns, and even by some farmers, consume considerably more, which perhaps brings to the same average that number of horses, which, from the poverty of their proprietors, subsist on a smaller allowance.

Attempts have been made to introduce potatoes, Swedish turnips, carrots, and other roots, as food for horses, all of which have tended, but not in any great degree, to lessen the quantity of oats required. It cannot be very erroneous, under all these circumstances, to estimate the subsistence of each horse at ten quarters of oats annually, which consequently, requires a supply of 22,000,000 quarters.

We have already seen that about 1,250,000 people subsist chiefly on oats; and estimating their annual consumption at 13 bushels each, the demand for this purpose will amount to 2,031,000 quarters.

A considerable quantity of oats is employed for the feeding of hogs and poultry,

for fattening lambs, and other domestic purposes, the amount of which it would be difficult to calculate, but if stated at 2,000,000 quarters, there can be no very important error affecting the view we are now taking of the subject.

The quantity required for seed may be estimated in the following manner: the different reporters to the Board of Agriculture, state the produce of lands sown with oats at different rates, which when added together, make an average of 4 quarters and 2 bushels per acre; and when we consider how much land is sown with oats, not because it is calculated for that grain, but because the cultivators are too poor, or too idle, to prepare it for a more valuable crop, we have not stated the average too low. Taking, then, 4 quarters 2 bushels as the produce of an acre, it will require 5,176,647 acres to yield the supply required, which, sown at the average rate of 5 bushels to the acre, will occasion a demand for 3,235,400 quarters.

Supposing this view of the subject to be correct, the demand will be thus:

For Horses - -	22,000,000
For the Inhabitants -	2,031,000
For various minor purposes	2,000,000
For seed - - -	3,235,400
Quarters,	29,266,400

As this estimate of the quantity of oats necessary for our consumption, is much greater than has been stated by former writers on this subject, it may be proper to remark, that it is in some measure sanctioned by Sir John Sinclair's General Report of Scotland, from which it appears that instead of the land sown with oats exceeding, as stated in this estimate, a little more than a fourth of the quantity sown with wheat, the proportion in the whole of that part of the Kingdom is nearly as ten to one, wheat being 140,095 acres, and oats 1,260,362 acres. It may be further remarked that for the last twenty years, the balance of the imports beyond the exports of oats, has considerably exceeded that of wheat, and that, particularly in the period from 1792 to 1812, whilst Ireland furnished us only with 883,892 quarters of wheat, she supplied us with 6,329,892 quarters of Oats.

The rich fen lands which have lately been brought under tillage, have produced a much larger quantity of oats than of wheat, and the poorer soils, which the late high prices of corn have brought into cultivation, have generally been in the first instance sown with oats, and will probably in the northern parts of England especially, continue for some years to bear a much larger proportion of oats than of the other corn crops.

In estimating the quantity of barley annually consumed in England, the returns of the quantity of malt paying the excise duty, are very useful guides; it appears, by papers laid on the table of the House of Commons, that in the year 1807 the duty was paid on 3,446,177 quarters of malt in England, which allowing an increase of one eighth in the process of malting, is the produce of 3,015,405 quarters of barley. It appears that the distilleries use also a considerable quantity of unmalted barley, in the manufacture of British spirits, varying in different houses, but which may be estimated at 10 quarters to the tun of 252 gallons. As in the year 1807, the quantity of

spirits was 15,180 tuns, it must have consumed 150,000 quarters of barley. It appears by the amount of the duty on malt and spirits, that an increase of about 10 per cent has taken place since the year 1807, and if this be added to the quantities before mentioned, it will make the consumption of barley, in the breweries and distilleries of England, 3,481,945 quarters. It is difficult to ascertain the quantity of barley which is consumed by pigs, poultry, and dogs, and applied to various minuter purposes, but in estimating it at one seventh of the quantity used by brewers and distillers, we cannot err very materially, and it will then amount to 497,420 quarters.

The quantity of land in Scotland appropriated to the growth of barley, according to Sir John Sinclair, is 280,193 acres; and as with the excellent culture generally adopted there, the average produce may be calculated at 5½ quarters to the Scotch acre (which is one fifth larger than the English acre) it will yield 1,541,062 quarters.

As the average increase of barley through Great Britain, cannot be estimated at more

than eight for one, it will require one seventh of the annual produce to be sown, which will amount to 788,632 quarters, and the demand for barley will stand thus:

Breweries and Distilleries of England, - - -	3,481,945
Pigs, Poultry, Dogs, and other purposes in ditto, - -	497,420
Growth of Scotland, - -	1,541,062
Seed for Great Britain, -	788,632
Quarters	6,309,059

In addition to the great articles of wheat, oats, and barley, there is a consumption in beans, pease, and rye, which though small, must not be omitted in this estimate; it will be very evident that there must be more difficulty in ascertaining the quantities of these, than of the larger articles. If the relative quantities that have been imported, may be taken as a criterion of consumption, it will appear that in a period of twenty years, from 1792 to 1812, there have been supplied from foreign countries, of both pease and beans about one third the quantity of barley, and that the quantity of rye imported, equals

that of pease and beans united. Rye, however, is very little grown in Scotland, and to no great extent in England, so that it is probable its import bears a greater proportion to its growth than either of the other species of grain. Under these circumstances, it cannot be very inaccurate to state the consumption of rye, pease, and beans, as equal to half that of barley, or about 3,000,000; but as in the calculation for feeding horses no deduction from the quantity of oats was made, on account of the other grain which is occasionally substituted for that species, we may subtract from these three articles one third, leaving it at 2,000,000 quarters; and then the whole demand for the annual consumption of Great Britain will appear thus:

Wheat - - -	12,400,000
Oats - - -	29,266,400
Barley - - -	6,309,059
Beans, Pease, and Rye	2,000,000
Quarters	49,975,459

Before we proceed to enquire, whether our own territory may be made to produce this very enormous quantity of corn, it may

not be amiss to consider, what dependance we ought to place on material assistance from foreign countries; what proportion we have a right to calculate on importing from every part of the globe, in the greatest probable failure of our own harvest. Let us suppose, that our own country should in any season produce only three fourths of our usual demand, that in every other part of the world the crops should be abundant, and the countries stocked with corn. Is it possible by the temptation of the highest prices, to import sufficient to compensate for our domestic deficiency?

It appears that in the year ending on the 5th of January, 1811, in which the shipping that arrived from foreign countries far exceeded every preceding year, the whole number of vessels, British and foreign, that entered the ports of England and Scotland, from all parts of the world, was 20,433, and the burden of them was 2,785,331 tons; now on the general estimation that five quarters of corn is equal to a ton burden, the whole quantity which could be furnished would be only 13,926,655 quarters, or a little

more than one fourth of the demand. To obtain a supply, even to this extent, during a whole year every other commercial operation must be suspended, our East and West India imports must be given up, and the great revenue derived from them abandoned; our importation of naval stores, though in the case supposed they can be the least dispensed with, must be neglected; and the ships which crowd our ports, bearing to us the various luxuries of the globe, must be freighted to bring the means of subsistence for the inhabitants of this Island.

A harvest so scanty as is here supposed, would not till two or three months had elapsed, be so clearly ascertained, as to induce those who have the direction of our mercantile shipping, to forego every other object of commerce, for the sake of importing corn; and therefore a great part of the shipping would be dispatched to other destinations, than to the ports where corn is exported, before the extent of the deficiency could be known. Many of the vessels would not arrive in our ports till half the year had elapsed, and many of them, like our East

India ships and coasters, would be totally unfit to be converted into corn vessels, under any circumstances: it may therefore be safely asserted that with the greatest exertions, with every inducement that the highest freights could offer, it would be impossible, with the present disposable shipping, to obtain by import more than 1,400,000 tons, or 7,000,000 quarters of corn.

In a very extreme case, a case only to be supposed, to shew the inadequacy of foreign imports to supply this great country, we may affirm, that if Great Britain were absolutely destitute of corn, all the mercantile shipping of Europe and America would be utterly incapable of supplying her demand.

By the last accounts laid before Parliament, the whole shipping of the British dominions, European and colonial, amounted to 2,500,000 tons. From a document presented by the Secretary of the Treasury to the President of the United States of America, before that country attacked us, it appears that their commercial shipping amounted to 1,140,000 tons. It cannot be supposed that the whole of the nations of Europe, with the addition

of South America, possess a quantity of mercantile shipping equal to one half of that which is navigated under the British flag. The whole amount of tonnage cannot exceed, if it equal, 5,000,000; if one half of these ships were loaded twice, and the other half once, with corn, not more than 38,000,000 quarters could be imported, which is little more than two thirds of our annual consumption.

To return, however, from extreme and supposed cases, we are enabled from past experience, and the clear evidence of facts, to calculate what proportion of our consumption may be depended upon from abroad, in any future deficiency.

We know that it is the expectation of increasing their gains, which induces mercantile men to abandon one pursuit, and direct their attention to another; if the prospect of augmenting their profit, is but little more than their usual employment of capital and attention affords, very few will exchange an old for a new course; but as this probability increases, the quantity of capital and attention will also increase. In the several years of scarcity which we have unfor-

tunately experienced, the prospect of advantage, from sending corn to this country, has been so great that a large share of the capital, and skill, not only of our own, but of foreign merchants, has been applied to this purpose; the enormous prices in Great Britain acted as a magnet, to attract hither all the corn that could possibly be sent from other countries; every mode which ingenuity could invent was exercised, every application of capital that could be effectual was made, and neither bribes nor influence were spared to evade the laws of those countries where there was any corn, for the purpose of sending it here, and yet, with all this stimulus, and with all the exertions that it created, the whole quantity which we received bore but a very inadequate proportion to our extensive consumption.

In the years 1800 and 1801, the greatest scarcity was experienced in England that has been known since, from an exporting, we became an importing country. The average price of wheat in those years was 18*s.* the bushel; at one period (March 1801) it was as high as 22*s.*; and yet the whole quantity brought into this country during these two years amounted but to 2,689,286 quarters of wheat, and 1,855,992 quarters of other grain, which is to our present consumption, in the proportion of about one eighth of wheat, or six weeks supply, and one fortieth, or less than two weeks supply, of other corn.

In the year 1810, another year of want, when the high prices presented inducements almost as great as in the preceding years, the quantity of wheat which we obtained from abroad bore nearly the same proportion to our wants, as that which was imported in 1800 and 1801. This quantity was 1,454,906 quarters of wheat, about six weeks consumption, whilst the supply of the other species of grain, was far less than in the former years, though the price was much higher: the whole quantity, deducting that portion which was re-shipped, amounted only to 646,034 quarters, being the consumption of less than four days; and for this inadequate supply we paid to foreigners no less a sum than £.7,000,000, whilst for equal quantities in the years 1814, the English growers of corn

were paid by the consumers only 3,700,000 pounds!

If it should be objected that, though we have not at present a reasonable expectation of a supply from abroad, sufficient to feed half our population, yet that by the stimulus created by such a market as Great Britain being at all times accessible, an increase might take place, which in a short period would be adequate to supply our deficiency; we reply, that even waving the difficulty which the insufficient means of transport present, and overlooking the impolicy of paying a bounty to encourage foreign agriculture, undoubted facts oppose themselves to this supposition, and show the fallacy of such expectations.

If we take a slight survey of the different countries of Europe from which we can form any prospect of a supply, we shall find, that their surplus growth of corn has, for some years past, been entirely sent to this country; for it appears that the pressing demands of Spain and Portugal have been supplied, as far as Europe has supplied them, by corn which had been previously sent to this

Kingdom, from the northern ports of the Continent; and as the average of the imports from those ports, for the last twenty years, has not exceeded 1,000,000 quarters annually, what reason is there to expect that, under any encouragement, this quantity can be increased tenfold, which it must be, to produce one fourth of our consumption?

It is well known that France, though a fertile, and if late reports be credited, a well cultivated, country, does not on an average of years produce more corn than is sufficient for her own consumption: on some few occasions exports for a limited time, and from particular districts, have been permitted, but no dependance can be placed on any supplies from thence, since Flanders, the most productive in corn of any of the countries lately included in her dominions, has been separated from her.

It is difficult to estimate what quantity of corn has been furnished to us from Flanders, because in our official documents, the imports from Flanders and France are classed together, and it appears that both have only furnished us in the last ten years, with a supply of 431,827 quarters of corn of every

description, and of this, three fourths arrived in one year (1810). Under the new arrangements, it is possible that the agricultural prosperity of Flanders may increase, and that she may be enabled to export to England, a larger quantity of grain than she has ever before done; at the same time it must be considered that its population is greater, in proportion to its extent of territory, than any other country in Europe, except Holland, amounting to 252 persons to a square mile, or one to two acres and a half of land.

Though the greater part of this country is rich, and in a very high state of cultivation, yet a considerable tract to the eastward is comparatively barren; in the part which is best cultivated, much land is destined to grow flax, and other articles not calculated for food; a considerable part is occupied by cities, towns, rivers, canals, and forests, so that probably not more than two acres to each person may be cultivated, to furnish both vegetable and animal food; as the cattle will require at least four sevenths of the land for their subsistence, that part destined to furnish corn cannot amount to so much as half an acre for

each human being; and if each acre produce four quarters of corn, or 3,600,000 quarters, and 2,000,000 of human beings consume each one quarter, the whole quantity that could be spared from that fertile country, would not exceed 1,600,000 quarters of corn of all descriptions; and even this is founded on the supposition, that every portion of the land is to be cultivated with the care and expence of a garden, that no competition is created by the urgent wants of other countries, and that no years occur peculiarly detrimental to the growth of corn.

The case of Flanders is stated thus strongly because it is the nearest country to us, it is accessible at every season, it is most highly productive, and the present political state of Europe promises, that in its new connexion, it will continue in the strictest alliance with us; and yet we see that on the most favourable supposition, it would be incapable of yielding us any very considerable supply.

Holland is, generally speaking, a grazing country, and though a part of it is cultivated with oats, and though few horses are kept there, it is not, on an average of years, capa-

ble of supplying its own population with corn; it has ever been an importing country: but, as its ports have been at all times open for free exportation, as well as importation, it has been a depôt for the countries on the upper parts of those great rivers, which empty themselves into the sea within its territory. It has also been made an entrepôt for Germany and Poland; and from these causes, we have in years of great scarcity, been furnished with corn, though in no great quantities, from thence. The two largest importations were in the years 1809 and 1810, in the former of which, we drew 94,056 quarters of wheat, and 213,690 quarters of other grain, and in the latter 189,016 quarters of wheat, and 77,796 quarters of all other corn.

It will readily be perceived that the inhabitants of a country, destined by the nature of its soil, and especially of its climate, to feed cattle, and to produce butter and cheese, cannot by any inducement which high prices may occasionally offer be tempted to turn their attention from cattle to corn.

The north of Germany, including those parts whose produce is shipped from the ports

in the Baltic, as well as those bordering on the Ems, the Elbe, and the Eyder, are by no means naturally productive in corn, except East Friesland, which abounds in oats, and part of the Dutchy of Mecklenburgh Schwerin, whose agricultural capital, having received a great addition from the high prices obtained for corn in England during our scarcity, has since that period considerably increased its growth of wheat, though its capacity of exporting is still but small. During ten years, from 1803 to 1812 inclusive, the whole quantity brought to Great Britain from Germany and Heligoland, amounted only to 761,276 quarters of oats, and 258,481 quarters of wheat. As the quantity of oats was nearly equal in all the years, when the ports were open, we may fairly presume that the exports were the real surplus production; but as the quantity of wheat in the year 1810 was 176,014 quarters, or nearly equal to the other nine years, we may conclude that it was an unnatural export attracted by the excessive price in England.

We cannot, then, calculate that until the cultivation of land is greatly improved, the

annual supply from Germany will much exceed 25,000 quarters of wheat, and 80,000 quarters of oats.

There are few countries in Europe where we can, with less reason, look forward to agricultural improvement, than in the part of Germany now under consideration. Though there are some extensive districts of good land, which are devoted to the fatting of oxen, and which would be less profitable to the occupiers in an arable state, the far greater part of the soil is a sandy heath, bearing little; and only capable of being brought into cultivation, by expending more on the land than it would be worth after the improvements; even the cultivation of green crops, that powerful corrective of sterility, cannot here be carried on with more prospect of success, than on Bagshot-heath, and the capital which it would require, is so difficult to be obtained, that no distant prospect of reimbursement could divert it into the channel of agriculture.

Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, scarcely deserve to be noticed in this review, as their wants forbid their scanty subsistence to be

sent to other countries; and though it appears by documents that 609,339 quarters of corn have been imported from those countries, within the last ten years, one third of which was in the year 1810, yet it is well known, that by far the greater part had been previously imported from Poland and Russia, and from the political circumstances of the world at that period, was sent to Great Britain with clearances from Swedish or Danish ports.

The islands which since the cession of Norway to Sweden form the most important part of the Danish dominions are indeed tolerably cultivated, and are usually enabled to export a portion of grain, but the urgent and regular demands of Norway and Sweden, will more than absorb any surplus quantity that can be produced in them.

The Russian Empire, though extensive, is thinly peopled, and badly cultivated; and a country so circumstanced, has seldom the power of raising more subsistence than its own demand requires. With a good government, with inducements to its inhabitants to exert their powers, and with an abundant capital, it undoubtedly might become an ex-

cellent resource to this Country in times of scarcity, but the motives to exertion are wanting, and we can contemplate no very great improvement in a short period; we can only judge of what supplies of corn she can yield us, from looking at what we have received from her on an average of years, which may be considered its natural surplus, and at what she afforded when the pressure of scarcity here raised the prices to an excessive height. In the seven years from 1803 to 1809 both inclusive, our imports from Russia were 279,968 quarters of corn, of which six sevenths were wheat; but the year 1805 was a year of comparative scarcity, and then the importation was equal to that of the other six. The quantity sent here during the three years ending in 1812, amounted to 244,550 quarters, to which may be added two thirds of that which by the custom-house books appears to have arrived from Sweden, Denmark, and Norway, making 492,428 quarters, or 164,144 quarters annually, which is nearly the same as was furnished under the former pressure.

We may then, fairly conclude, that the natural superfluity of Russia can supply us with 30,000 quarters, and when the prices are raised to an enormous height, we may expect a supply of 160,000 quarters. It is impossible to calculate what Russia may hereafter become, but under any circumstances likely to arise in a few years, we cannot depend on a much larger supply.

It has been supposed that Poland contains inexhaustible stores of provisions, and that this country may at all times depend on such supplies from thence, as ought to banish the apprehension of scarcity, if the sea be freed from a superior navy, and her ports not closed by the forces of some continental enemy.

There are few countries of whose interior economy and resources we are less informed than of Poland; it is generally known only, that the country is by nature fruitful, that it is wretchedly governed, and that the population is smaller, in proportion to its extent, than in almost any other part of Europe.

The divisions which, at different periods, have been made of this unfortunate country, by the three powers who appropriated different

portions of its territory, will give us some means of forming an estimate of its power of affording supplies to this and other countries. Russia acquired by the partition of Poland in 1773, a district containing 1,226,966 inhabitants; in 1793, another containing 3,745,663; and in 1795, the final partition added to the Russian dominions 1,407,402; making in all 6,380,031, or nearly half of its people. The corn produced in this extensive country has been shipped from the ports of Russia, and has been allowed for in the view taken of the exports of that country, so that it requires no notice at present.

The accession of territory acquired by Austria in the different partitions of Poland, consisting of Eastern Galicia, Western Galicia, and Lodomeria, contains a population of 3,903,297 inhabitants. The distance from this division of Poland to Dantzic, the place of exportation, must render the transport of corn excessively expensive, and as it must pass though the states subject to Russia, and to Prussia, it is not extraordinary that its export should be very considerably diminished. One of the witnesses before the Lords Com-

mittee (Mr. Barandon) accordingly states, that the importations from Cracow and Sandomir, and indeed from the whole of Poland, have not been so large as they were in former years; the nature of his examination did not lead to the particular fact, but it may fairly be inferred, from his naming two specific places, that the greatest diminution of import must be from their vicinity, that is, from the part of Poland now annexed to Austria.

Mr. Solly "states that about the year 1801 or 1802, (probably he means 1800) "when a bounty was given upon such a plan that it secured to the importer a given price, at that time the increase was incalculable, and the exertions to bring corn out of Galicia were very great:" from this we may infer, that the distance and consequent expence of transport, acts as a bar to a supply from thence, unless under the pressure of extraordinary scarcity, and excessively high prices.

Prussia in the different partitions, though she has acquired the least population, appears to have added to her dominions that portion of the country which is the most important, in the particular view in which we are now re-

garding it; the exported corn is principally grown in the countries newly named, Eastern Prussia, Western Prussia, Southern Prussia, and New Eastern Prussia, containing together 3,261,625 souls.

It appears by all the evidence, both before the Committee of the Lords, and Commons, that this country is divided among great proprietors, whose slaves till the ground partly for their own subsistence, which is almost exclusively rye, and partly for their Lords, who draw their revenues from the wheat sold to foreigners; that the land is so fertile, and so adapted to the growth of wheat, as to require but little labour, and the quantity of new ground so extensive, as to render manure unnecessary; that after growing a crop of wheat, the land is suffered to return to its former neglected state, and in a few years becomes again covered with firs, and other brush wood.

These facts were corroborated by the different witnesses who, though contradicting in the most direct manner the assertions of each other on some points, appear to have agreed on these topics. One of the witnesses

(Mr. Solly) says the corn is so badly harvested that, unless a high price induces the grower to re-stack it in the ensuing spring, it is suffered to perish; another (Mr. Barandon) states that he never knew a country, in which so much pains are taken to preserve the corn as in Poland, that it is never put in stacks, but directly into warehouses in the straw, and thrashed during the winter. The former gentleman says there is not an estate without a distillery; another (Mr. Drewe) says, that in the parts he visited, at the houses of the different nobility, there were no distilleries at all, though he afterwards states, that they drink brandy made in the country from corn.

Allowing for such variation in testimony as must arise from different people, seeing the same country under different views, or visiting different districts of so extensive a country, we may thus far ascertain, that sufficient spirituous liquors are distilled from grain, to supply the consumption of the more numerous body of the inhabitants, who cannot indulge in foreign luxuries, and who are as

much attached to spirits as their Russian neighbours.

The lower classes of the inhabitants appear to subsist almost wholly upon rye bread, or an inferior kind of pulse; and we may, with some apparent probability, assume that the agricultural labour of that part of Poland now annexed to Prussia, peopled by 3,260,000 inhabitants, is directed to three principal objects: first, to the production of corn for its own food; secondly, to the growth of corn to supply the domestic distilleries; and, thirdly, to produce wheat for foreign consumption.

It is certainly difficult to ascertain, what quantity of produce might be expected from land of the richest description, never exhausted by corn crops; but the small population of Polish Prussia, and especially the enslaved condition of that population, forbid us to form a very high estimate of its surplus produce. However badly the people may be fed, cloathed, and lodged, however little brandy they may be allowed, all is drawn by their own labour from their own soil, and the consumption must be nearly equal to the production.

A country abounding in horses kept for show, for pleasure, or for war, must consume large quantities of corn, and it would not be difficult to show that 3,600,000 persons, supposing half of them to be employed in agriculture, could not on any soil, with which we are acquainted, produce a surplus beyond their consumption of two bushels of wheat per head. We are not, however, driven to the necessity of making so tiresome a calculation; for though one of the witnesses before the Lords (Mr. Solly) asserted "that this country does not consume more than two thirds of the quantity which Poland generally exports;" yet we know from better authority, that the whole exports from Dantzic in eleven years, from 1793 to 1803, inclusive, were only 315,139 lasts, or 3,387,730 quarters, which is little more than three months of our consumption in eleven years, instead of sixteen years consumption as he stated it*.

* Export of wheat from Dantzic, from the year 1793 to 1803, inclusive, taken from annual accounts published in that city, in lasts of 10 quarters 6 bushels.

Years.	England.	Other countries.	Total.
1793	9,451	5,963	15,414
1794	6,244	12,529	18,873

This statement is further supported by evidence given before the Committee of the House of Commons, by a native of that country, though a resident in this: Mr. Hennings being asked if the quantity produced could be considerably increased, replied, "the quantity of land could produce considerably more, but from want of population and capital, no considerable increase can be expected." On being asked what quantity of wheat could, upon an average year, be drawn from Poland, his answer was, "I have known of from 30 to 50,000 lasts in one year from Poland, the last being ten quarters."

From the return here presented of the exports in seasons of past distress from the Dantzic custom-house document, and from the evidence of an intelligent native, we may rest satisfied with the conclusion, that from

Years.	England.	Other countries.	Total.
1795	4,283	9,491	13,774
1796	20,407	6,474	26,881
1797	17,496	6,398	23,894
1798	18,357	7,991	26,348
1799	16,713	8,311	25,024
1800	37,202	3,661	40,863
1801	33,748	3,855	37,603
1802	27,028	25,388	52,416
1803	11,725	22,424	34,149
			315,139

the boasted cultivation of Poland no prices have drawn, or could draw, more than 500,000 quarters, or fourteen days consumption of wheat.

America has been considered by some persons as a source from whence, in a period of scarcity, we might calculate on receiving a large supply of flour and wheat; but if we examine the exact quantity with which she has furnished us, we shall place little reliance on that country. In the ten years from 1803 to 1812 inclusive, we have received from thence only 236,376 quarters of corn, and 1,858,815 cwts. of flour, equivalent to 743,526 quarters of wheat; or taking the average of the ten years, we have imported annually about 98,000 quarters of corn, being scarcely the consumption of three days.

By a return from the Executive Government to the Legislature it appears, that the whole of the exports of corn from the United States to all parts of the world, in 1805, was as follows:

777,513 barrels of flour.
18,041 bushels of wheat.

1,474 bushels of rye.
55,400 ——— of oats.
7,185 ——— of barley.
861,501 ——— of indian corn.
56,836 tierces of rice.

If the whole of this quantity had been sent to Great Britain, the wheat, flour, and rice, would have been about one week's consumption of bread corn; and of the other articles, not sufficient for one day.

It is, however, well known that the greater part of the surplus corn of America must necessarily be sent to the West Indies; the different European settlements there never growing sufficient grain for their own consumption; and however high the price may be raised in England, the West India market will be equally high, and being much nearer to America a quicker return can be obtained, and therefore that market will be preferred.

It has been thought necessary to take this cursory view of the extraneous supply of provisions which may be drawn hither, because most of those who have written on the corn trade, and corn laws, have either passed it very slightly, or have tacitly admitted as a

fact, what is here proved to be false; *viz.* that in case of a scarcity at home, produced either by unfavourable seasons, by the increase of our population, or by sacrificing our agricultural to our commercial interests, we might depend on a supply from abroad, at no other sacrifice than paying a higher price for it than it would cost if raised on our own soil.

There are few severer evils to a community, than great fluctuations in the price of articles of the first necessity; among the vulgar it is the source of discontent and exasperation against the government, and frequently against those by whom they are fed, and to all classes it is injurious in a very high degree. Now there is great reason to apprehend, that ignorance of the relative quantity of grain which is produced at home, to that which is imported from other countries, has been the cause of the greatest fluctuations.

When we have had a harvest rather scanty, yet not so deficient as to justify the fear of famine, if the ports of the continent have been shut against us, or even if the bare

apprehension of such exclusion has existed, it has caused a rise in the price of corn beyond what could have taken place, if the comparison between our own growth and foreign importation had been familiarly reflected on; and from not estimating how small any supply from abroad must necessarily be, a panic has prevailed; and both in 1805 and 1812, the prices of corn were raised far beyond what the deficiency in the quantity grown could have justified.

After a plentiful harvest, and an apprehension of an inundation of corn from the continent, a contrary panic has been created, which, if the relative supplies had been understood, could not have existed. Each farmer has pressed with his grain to the market, and the consequence has been an unnatural depression, as little justified by the supply, as the unnatural elevation that preceded it.

Another ill consequence of ignorance as to the relative quantity of our growth to our consumption has been produced in foreign countries; for, whenever an opinion of deficiency in our harvests has prevailed on the continent, the extent of our wants being

magnified, such an advance has taken place in corn, as to make us pay much more for the quantity demanded, than we should otherwise have done. It appears, therefore, to be of material importance, both to the legislature and to the public, to ascertain, as accurately as possible, what are our wants; what supply we can obtain from other countries; and what reasonable expectations we have of raising sufficient at home, not only for our present consumption, but to meet that increased demand which our increasing population will require.

From this view of the relation between our foreign and domestic supply, we shall be encouraged to hope for a return of the circumstances, which till the year 1766, had long existed in this country; when we had not only sufficient for our own consumption, but had usually a surplus quantity of corn for that of other countries*; to this surplus recourse could always be had in unfavourable sea-

* The excess of our exports, above our imports, in eight years ending 1766, was 2,401,195 quarters of wheat, or an annual average of 300,149 quarters; the excess of imports, above the exports, in eight years ending 1812, was 3,770,387 quarters of wheat, or an annual average of 471,293 quarters.

sons, by stopping the exportations, and thus the superfluity of a productive be made to supply the deficiency of an unproductive harvest.

This most desirable state of affairs, can only be made to return, from our dependance being mainly placed in our own supply, and from security being given that capital devoted to agriculture shall be subject to no other risk of depreciation than that which may arise from improvident expenditure, from negligent indolence, or from such unfruitful seasons as in the course of years must be reasonably expected to occur.

It is not a deficiency of knowledge, an obstinate adherence to ancient practices, or a scarcity of labourers, that have kept agriculture from progressive improvements, similar to those which have taken place in manufactures, and other branches of national industry and ingenuity, but a want of that capital, which is the moving principle in every concern.

The profits of capital employed in agriculture, under any circumstances, fall short, both in prospect and in reality, of those

which manufactures and commerce usually promise; the most sanguine cultivator does not flatter himself with great gains, and the principal inducement to employ money in such operations is the belief, that though the profit is small, it is tolerably secure, the risk of the loss being less than in concerns which present a more flattering prospect; and that the expences of domestic establishments are much lower than those which are incurred by persons, who from their commercial concerns reside in large cities.

In general, then, we may assert that the increase of agricultural capital must be looked for, not from those of sanguine temperament, who form high expectations of gain, but from the more calm and sober-minded part of the community, from those who look to security as their first object, and who will lay out no considerable portion of their fortune, where they see any prospect of risk.

To increase the productions of the earth, we must give such encouragement to agriculture, as will convince the most cautious, that in embarking their property in such operations they shall be secured, as far

as legislative enactments can secure them, from any risks but such as arise from their own negligence, or from unfruitful seasons; and as the dread of competition with those, who, from various causes, can raise corn cheaper than the British husbandman, acts as a check on our cultivation, the rendering such a competition impossible, would give the strongest stimulus to those who have property to embark in agriculture.

The lands in Great Britain already under cultivation, are certainly more productive than they have been in any former period, but they are almost all capable of such further improvement, as may increase their produce far beyond its present quantity, and render it fully equal to the wants of a still greater population than this Island at present contains. Even if the land in cultivation had reached its maximum of improvement (a point which, perhaps, has in no country, at any period, been attained) we have a resource in lands at present in an uncultivated state, which with the requisite capital might be made capable of producing sufficient sustenance for several millions beyond our present population; but

whilst a competition is permitted, which places the price of corn not at what it costs the British farmer, but at what the foreigner, who cultivates without his expences and his taxes, can raise it, the best cultivated lands must become less productive by the withdrawing of capital; and the waste lands, from the want of capital, must continue in their present uncultivated state.

It has been shown that almost every branch of our various manufactures is protected from foreign competition; the question whether we can purchase any article cheaper of foreigners than of our own countrymen, has never influenced the Legislature, nor have even the consumers of such articles wished for their admission on that account; but on the contrary, our manufacturers of silks, muslins, linens, stuffs, and many other articles, have procured restrictive laws to be enacted, on the simple ground that foreigners were able to make such articles so much cheaper as to undersell them in our own markets. This may be wise and good policy; but if it be wise and just to enact protecting laws in these smaller concerns, how much

more wise and just is it to enact similar laws for the protection of the great interests of the state, in the prosperity of which the major part of the population, and of the property of the kingdom is involved?

The actual effect of the competition in corn, which has existed for the last twelve months between the foreign and the British grower, has been so injurious to the latter, that he has been compelled to sell his crop at a price, that not only fails to yield him an interest for his capital, or even a subsistence, but subjects him to a considerable loss; and when we consider the number of persons interested in the prosperity of agriculture, and the amount of property invested in it, that alone entitles it to serious and immediate attention; if this state of things continue, and the agricultural interest be suffered to yield to the clamour of the large towns, the inhabitants of those towns will themselves ultimately feel its most distressing effects.

Our population is now certainly increasing, and no events are likely to occur in a few years to check that increase; but unless agriculture be protected, our means of subsistence must

diminish, and then with a more numerous population, and less sustenance, we shall find that the foreign supplies to which our own landed interests have been sacrificed, will be very inadequate to the maintenance of our numerous inhabitants.

It is easy to trace the consequences that must follow, from the agriculture of the country being kept in its present depressed condition. The first step in the train of evils has already begun to operate, though so silently as not to be generally remarked; the steps which had been taken for bringing the waste lands into cultivation are already suspended. Since the last decision of the House of Commons no measures have been pursued to bring them into culture, nor will there be any whilst there is a certainty, as there is at present, that the capital expended on them will be utterly lost.

The next step in this direction will be, that prudent men engaged in Agriculture, will gradually contract their expenditure on the land, as a means of withdrawing part of their capital; the most obvious way to do this will be, to lay down their corn land to

grass, and thereby dispense with the plough, always an expensive implement, whether worked by horses, or by oxen. Breeding and fatting cattle will then take place of cultivating grain, and thus the land will yield only one part in four of its present aliment; for it is ascertained, that a given quantity of land will subsist four times as many human beings on corn as on meat.

It may be thought that diminishing tillage, and increasing grazing, if it render corn dear, will render meat cheap; but this is a delusive error; for nothing is more certain, than that, by the convertible system of husbandry, as practised by the best farmers, who have adequate capitals, the land will support as much cattle as can be fed on permanent pasture, besides a quantity of corn, the power of which in sustaining human life, will be equal to that of the cattle; or in other words, that the application of capital in the way of convertible husbandry, will double the produce of the land: by thus compelling the farmers to lay down their land to grass, the country will be deprived of a very large proportion of its food.

A considerable portion of the lands of Eng-

land generally denominated cold clay land, has been of late enclosed, and brought under the plough, and, with considerable expenditure, has been made to produce wheat, and other grain; the property vested in such undertakings has been embarked with the reasonable expectation, that, in a few years, the produce would replace the expenditure; but if the price of the produce be suffered to sink below the cost of cultivation, as it has done in the last twelve months, such lands must return to their original state, and produce only as much grass as will afford a scanty subsistence to an inconsiderable number of cattle: now as the greater part of the recently enclosed districts are of this description, we may fairly conclude, that, in a very few years, the country will be deprived of every advantage which it has of late received, from the application of a portion of its capital and industry to the improvement of the waste lands, and with the additional calamity, that the whole expenditure having been a complete loss, no improvement will again be attempted till a capital equal to what has been annihi-

lated be again procured, and applied to give activity to the same quantity of labour.

Some of the lately enclosed lands are light and sandy soils, which have indeed cost less at first to bring them into a productive state than those of the former description; but, on the other hand, they require a more frequent renewal of the expense, and without constant labour and manure, will speedily return to their original sterility.

These two descriptions of land are calculated to have produced one eighth part of the corn grown in Great Britain in the years 1813 and 1814; and if the occupiers of them are compelled, by the depreciated price of their produce, to give up their cultivation, it will create a deficiency greater than any importation can supply.

The frequent recurrence of green crops in the course of husbandry, is a well known means of increasing fertility; but, by protracting the period when a return is to be received for the expence incurred, a large proportion of capital is required. From the late prices of produce, the farmers have incurred a loss of part of their capital, and if the same state of

things should continue but a few years longer, the remainder must be greatly diminished, if not wholly absorbed; their necessities will thus compel them to grow corn crops in much quicker succession than they do at present, because they will be unable to wait the slow but sure process of better husbandry; the consequence will necessarily be, that though their returns will be more quick, they will be less abundant, and the lands by this course of husbandry will gradually deteriorate; as it is well known, that, if the soil be impoverished by too frequent repetition of exhausting crops, a long course of careful attention, and a considerable expenditure, become necessary to restore it to its former fertility.

The diminution of agricultural capital, which though it has yet but begun, and its operation is not very extensively felt, will, if the present state of the markets continue, operate with increasing rapidity: the first to suffer will be the labourers in agriculture; as the capital of the farmer diminishes, he will, from having less to expend, employ fewer hands; this is the first, and to him the most

obvious step, in the progress of economizing his resources. The want of employment by those who can turn their labour to no occupations but those of agriculture, will be felt in the increase of pauperism, and its consequence, the advance of the poor rates, which will take place in a degree scarcely to be calculated.

From the labourers the calamity will extend to the smaller cultivators, whose capitals must be speedily exhausted, and they, instead of contributing, must become partakers of the parochial assessments. This is no fancied picture of anticipated evils, but a real representation of facts, which have already begun to be evident to every observing man, conversant in rural affairs. On most farms the number of labourers is already diminished, and the agricultural poor are consequently more destitute of employment than they have been within any recent period, a circumstance that can only be attributed to the depressed condition of their employers. As the employers are deprived of their capital, the number of labourers to be paid must proportionally diminish; and as labour is

diminished, the productive powers of the land will decrease, for it is the eternal law of nature, that by the labour of man the earth must be replenished.

It would be easy to show, that a depressed state of agriculture, a state in which the price of its productions is regulated, not by the cost to the British grower, who is charged with heavy imposts and expences, but by the cost to persons in a distant country, freed from his expences and burdens, and who, consequently, are enabled to produce it cheaper than he can, must extend its baneful effects far beyond the immediate sphere of its operations. The landed proprietors, the clergy, the merchants, and the tradesmen whom they employ, must all generally become involved in the sufferings of the farmer, and with them will be involved, ultimately, the inhabitants of our manufacturing and commercial cities, who, when British agriculture is so depressed as to be deficient in the means of supply, will look in vain to that scanty assistance which importation can furnish to relieve their necessities.

In the state of things we are now anticipating, and to which we must come if our

agricultural interests are to be sacrificed for the supposed encouragement of our manufacturing exports, the increase of our population, which we have been accustomed to consider as a proof of our increasing prosperity, will become an augmentation of our misery. The check to population will not be felt, till a scarcity of aliment has made the evil irremediable, and a numerous unemployed population without sufficient subsistence, will be a calamity far beyond any we have ever felt; if to this should be added a foreign war, a circumstance which no man, in the present state of Europe, will put entirely out of his calculation, we may anticipate a period of woes of the most alarming kind, brought on by abandoning the system pursued in this country till 1766.

Many who are ready to admit the evils that must arise from the depressed state of the agricultural parts of the community, and would gladly have recourse to any proper measures to remedy such evils, have expressed doubts of the fact, that the present and late prices of corn have been, and still are, so low, as to leave a loss instead of a

profit to the grower. As such persons cannot have considered the subject thoroughly, or have not been sufficiently informed to ascertain the truth, it merits some consideration.

The examinations before the Committees of both Houses of Parliament, which have been published, contain the opinions of some of the most able and experienced agriculturists in England and Scotland, some of whom have merely given their opinions, and others have furnished very minute and accurate calculations. The opinions of such men are of much weight; but, instead of dwelling on bare opinions, we may now have recourse to such plain statements as every man may understand, and, if there be a fallacy in them, easily detect it.

It should, however, be previously considered, that the different agricultural witnesses who were examined by the Committees, appear to be men whose property, and mode of cultivation, is much superior to that of the great body of English farmers; they appear also to be employed on lands, either naturally, or by their improvement, of a superior quality; and from these circumstances

it will be obvious, that, in making an estimate of the price at which corn can be grown, they have calculated what it costs on lands of a similar quality, and with modes of cultivation of similar excellence to their own; now it is certain that with such good cultivation, corn costs the grower less than it costs those, who having inferior lands, or less capital, are compelled to practise inferior systems of management; in fact, such agriculturists as these gentlemen, raise corn at a price at which it cannot be raised by the great mass of cultivators, because on the same breadth of land, they produce a much greater quantity of corn, as well as of food for cattle.

Mr. Buxton from Essex laid before the Lords' Committee, a variety of calculations, apparently made with much accuracy, the result of which is, that wheat should sell at from 95*s.* to 100*s.* per quarter, barley from 40*s.* to 45*s.* and oats from 30*s.* to 35*s.* to pay the expence of the farmer. Mr. Driver, an eminent land surveyor, states his opinion that five pounds per quarter for wheat is the price necessary as a protection to the grower;

but as he communicated no calculations or documents, we may pass over his evidence without any other remark, than that as he has not confined his observations to the best lands, and the best cultivators, but in the course of his practice must have surveyed much inferior land, and bad cultivation, he is more likely to be correct than those who have confined their views to more improved farms.

Mr. Arthur Young, so well known to the agricultural world by his diligence and talents, presented to the Committee the result of the enquiries of the Board of Agriculture, by which it appears that the cost of wheat is 87*s.* of barley 44*s.* and of oats 34*s.* per quarter, allowing 10 *per cent* for the interest of the capital employed. It may be worthy of remark, that the calculations of the Board are made on the supposition of land producing three quarters of wheat per acre, whereas it is well known that the average produce of the whole Island is considerably less.

The very accurate calculations laid before the Committee by Mr. Lake, from Kent, prove most clearly that wheat at 84*s.* beans

at 42*s.* and oats at 32*s.* per quarter, will create a loss to the farmer of 7*s.* 4*d.* per acre; and in another series of estimates for six years, it is shown by the same gentleman, that if *no rent were paid*, and wheat sold at 75*s.* beans at 36*s.* and oats at 28*s.* per quarter, the profit would be only 9*s.* 4*d.* per acre *per annum.*

Three considerable farmers from Scotland, the produce of whose land bespeaks a very high degree of cultivation, and where they are neither subject to poor rates, nor tythes, estimate the remunerating price for wheat at 84*s.* barley 42*s.* and oats 33*s.* per quarter; and from the clearness of their mode of estimating, there can be no reason to doubt its accuracy.

Mr. Dale, of Tottenham, in Middlesex, presented a statement, by which, calculating his produce of wheat to be the great quantity of 4 quarters, and his oats of 6 quarters to the acre, and selling the former at 80*s.* and the latter at 30*s.* his profit in the wheat would be 2*l.* 6*s.* and in the oats 9*s.* per acre; but in his calculation he has taken no notice of the interest of his capital. From being near

London, he sells his straw at 4*l.* per acre. The far greater part of English farmers sell no straw, but consume it with cattle, or convert it into manure; now if this gentleman were at a distance from a great town, and sold no straw, it would not be fair to calculate that article as worth more than two pounds per acre, and then at the prices of wheat 80*s.* and oats 30*s.* he would lose on the first crop, allowing 17*s.* 6*d.* for interest, 11*s.* 6*d.* per acre, and on the second, allowing 12*s.* 6*d.* for interest, his loss would be 2*l.* 3*s.* 6*d.* per acre.

Mr. Benett, from Wiltshire, in his evidence before the House of Commons, produced a very detailed statement of the expences and produce of a farm in that county of 945 acres, in which, taking the price of wheat at 96*s.* and barley at 48*s.* there appears a loss sustained of 66*l.* 18*s.* but as he allows interest on the capital employed at the rate of 10 *per cent*, which on 6697*l.* 8*s.* is 669*l.* 14*s.*, if that then be reduced to 5 *per cent*, the profit, beyond interest, would be 267*l.* 18*s.* By another calculation of the same farm it appears that estimating wheat at 80*s.* and barley at 40*s.* the annual loss would be 359*l.* 11*s.* 8*d.*

Thus far the whole tenor of the evidence from various descriptions of people, and from different parts of the country, has been uniformly the same; and though it has been deemed necessary only to abridge what was stated by those, who supported their opinions by documents and calculations, yet on examining the whole body of the evidence, it will be found that no one person entertained an opinion that wheat would remunerate the grower at less than 80*s.* per quarter, whilst all who produced any calculation thought a much higher price necessary.

One gentleman, Mr. Mant, however, thought that if the *property tax was taken off*, and *the price of labour reduced*, 72*s.* per quarter for wheat would be a protecting price, but with the present expences it would be insufficient. Mr. Mant appears to be a considerable merchant in London, and occupies a farm in Hampshire of 192 acres: it is fair to suppose that, in the calculations he has made, if any error should appear, it is the result of his giving his principal attention to his most important concern, and not from any wish or design to mislead the Committee.

In his calculations of expences and produce, the former appear to be very considerably under-rated, and the produce of wheat is taken at four quarters to the acre, which is at least one third more than the average of England. By this calculation he makes a capital of £.2400 to produce a profit of £.342, but it is material to remark, that his profit on the 250 sheep which cost £.400, and whose feed cost £.60, and which, including the wool, sells for £.931. 5*s.* is no less a sum than £.471. 5*s.* or £.130 more than the whole profit of his farm; so that by his own showing there is a loss on his corn, though it happens to be more than balanced by his uncommon success in breeding and fatting sheep. Some other remarks might be made on this pro forma estimate, which would clearly shew its fallacy, but as it seems to have been made without much consideration, it would appear invidious to dwell on it longer, and it seems less necessary to notice the other parts of the calculation, because it is professedly founded on the supposition of the abandonment of the property tax, and a reduction of the price of labour, neither of which have yet taken place.

It may be objected, perhaps, to the whole of this evidence, that all the persons who appeared before the Committees, were either landholders, farmers, meal-men, or land agents, and therefore their testimony is suspicious, as they may be thought to have an interest in keeping the produce of the land at very high prices. If such an objection should be made, it will naturally be asked of whom can information be obtained on the subject of the cost of corn, but from those who have been conversant with its growth? Can any information be obtained from the tradesmen of Cheapside, from the nailors of Dudley, the fustian-cutters of Manchester, or the shearmen of Wiltshire? Though all of them have, and will readily again petition against any reform in the corn Laws.

Every man may understand the calculations submitted to the Committees, and it is competent to any one, with a very small degree of knowledge of rural affairs, to detect any mistatement, if such exists. By the whole of this voluminous evidence, which the diligence of the two Committees has collected, it appears most clearly that the

growers of corn, for the last twelve months, instead of reaping a profit on their capital, or a reward for their industry, have incurred a loss of full twenty-five *per cent*, or one quarter on the whole of the produce; no statement has been attempted that contradicts, or, in the least degree, renders this account suspicious; the Committee pressed for evidence on the part of those who had presented the numerous petitions against alterations in the corn Laws, without effect, nor has any writer attempted to prove, or even ventured to assert, that the loss to the farmer on the whole of his crop has not been considerable.

It is most certain, that this state of things cannot continue, even for a few years, without most calamitous effects, both on the individuals who suffer such losses, and ultimately on every other part of the community, which will soon feel the evils of scarcity, and the additional sufferings that it is too late to remedy that evil. Perhaps it will not be far from correct, to state that the returns of agriculture are about two thirds of the capital employed in it: now if a man with £2000

loses annually of that sum, one quarter of his return, or twenty-five *per cent* out of £1400, and has to support himself and his family from his capital, however great his economy may be, the whole will be exhausted in five or six years: in the meantime he will, by lessening the expences of his establishment, by keeping less cattle, by employing fewer labourers, and by cultivating in an inferior manner, endeavour to protract the period of his ruin; but by those very steps, which in the man himself may be wise and prudent, the public will shortly be most severe sufferers, the land will be choaked with weeds, and become less productive, improvements will be stopped, agricultural capital be diminished, and the country be dependent on foreigners for even the scanty pittance they can afford, in return for sums of money which we shall be ill able to furnish.

It is of importance to remark that this representation of what must happen, is principally applicable to the most numerous class of farmers, to those who, with small capitals, labour with persevering industry to support themselves and their families, and who scarcely

anticipate for their successors any other course than the patient pursuit of the same laborious industry: these men, the most numerous of their profession, when reduced from their present condition to that of day-labourers, will seldom again emerge from that state, and thus will be annihilated one of the most important links in the chain of British society.

If this should happen, and it is inevitable without some improvement in their state, no persons will be found to fill up the station from whence they have been driven; and the proprietors of lands, deprived of their tenantry, the plain Yeomen of England, will seek in vain for substitutes in any other class of society: their lands must be tilled by labourers hired by themselves, or remain uncultivated till new arrangements have been formed, and the whole order of society be recast*.

"Princes and Lords may flourish, or may fade,
A breath can make them as a breath hath made,
But a bold Yeomanry, their country's pride,
When once destroy'd can never be supplied."

* In one parish in Kent, near the author's residence, three farms, of nearly 400 acres, are now uncultivated: their leases expired at Michaelmas, and though offered at low rents no tenants have been found for them.

Among many who seem sensible of the evils of the present state of affairs, we frequently hear the landed proprietors censured for having raised the rent of their lands, and such persons exclaim, "the rents must be lowered:" this, therefore, requires some consideration.

A considerable class in the country, possessors of estates derived from their ancestors, important to the community by their rank, by their education, and by their virtues, from which has hitherto been drawn the far greater portion of our statesmen, our magistrates, our clergy, and the officers of our Navy and Army, have been compelled by the increased expence of every article, both of necessity and luxury, to follow the march of circumstances, and to increase their revenues, not by any force, but by voluntary conventions with their tenants, who on their part have cheerfully agreed to give an increased income, the advance on their productions enabling them to do so without injuring themselves; now without any abatement in the cost of those articles, which are indispensable in their

rank, without any reduction on the imposts, which bear with peculiar pressure on them, these respectable members of the community are expected to reduce their incomes, and to descend from the rank they have hitherto held in society, whilst the stockholder, the merchant, and the manufacturer, retain the full amount of the incomes they enjoy.

What reason or justice can there be in such an expectation? Does the man who now possesses a thousand acres of land, at the increased rent, enjoy more luxuries, accumulate more money, or maintain a higher relative station in society, than the possessor of the same portion of land did fifty years ago? Does he draw a greater revenue from his capital, than the man who has the same value of property vested in government or private securities? Do the taxes, which government has been compelled to impose, fall with the same pressure on the fund-holder, as on him? Must the newly-acquired proprietors of land, who have invested their capital in purchases, which produce much less annuity than they could have obtained from other modes of in-

vestment, see their incomes reduced to a still lower standard, and that whilst the stockholder is to suffer no reduction?

In valuing land, one third of the net produce was formerly considered as the fair proportion to appropriate as rent to the landlord; it is now scarcely a fourth, and in many instances not a fifth. Is the proportion to be still further reduced till the landlord has no rent left? Or must he give up the whole, in order that corn may be as cheap in England as it is in Poland?

Every attempt to reduce the fair income of property, whether accruing from land, from commerce, or from the funds, ought to be met with the most marked reprobation, but surely if, to reduce the price of the necessaries of life, it be requisite to diminish the income of any order of men by legislative interposition, the first class that presents itself for reduction is that of the stockholder.

If the taxes, which have been the principal cause of the increase in all articles of consumption, were abolished, the farmer could afford to reduce the price of the necessaries of life, and the landlord would be satisfied

* The rent of land has not risen in proportion to the increased price of provisions

with less rent; but would it be right for this reason to say to the public creditors, provisions must be lowered, and therefore taxes must be abolished, and you must agree to accept half your usual dividend? Would or ought the stockholder to acquiesce in this unjust proposition? And yet this is the very proposition made to the more important, the more productive, and the more numerous class of society, when they are told that they "must lower their rents."

It ought to be remembered that the increase in the price of land was not the cause, but the effect, of the high prices of provisions;* that rents were only raised when an increase of taxation had previously raised the productions of the land; that the greatest portions of land were let on leases, which when renewed, were increased in some, but not in full, proportion to the increase of their produce; that in general, especially among the larger proprietors, the competition among farmers has not been used as the instrument of raising rents to the full amount that might have been obtained, but that the moderation of the landlords has checked, rather than encouraged, the ten-

dency, which was at one time too prevalent, to offer unreasonable prices for farms,—a fact allowed before the Committees, and confirmed by every one who has attended to rural economy.

If we could suppose that either by legislative enactment the landholders could be compelled, or that they could be induced, voluntarily to reduce their rents to one half the present amount, all the taxes continuing as they now are, the reduction, if put in the pockets of the farmers, would not be sufficient to enable them to cultivate corn, and sell it at the prices they have obtained for twelve months past, without suffering a loss.

The Board of Agriculture has delivered to the Committee of the House of Lords, replies to queries addressed to fifty-two occupiers of lands, in different counties, at a distance from each other, showing the relative expence of rent to the other expences of cultivation, on a farm of one hundred acres. The rate of rent, of taxes, of tithes, and of labour, vary in every return; in some few cases the whole expence is not more than three times as much as the rent, but in many it is from

six to seven times the rent: the result of the whole fifty-two reports, as averaged together, is that 100 acres of land paying a rent of £.161. 12*s.* 7*d.* *per annum*, incurs, besides rent, other expences amounting to £.601. 15*s.* 1*d.* thus making the whole cost of cultivation, £.763. 7*s.* 8*d.*; if then the productions of the 100 acres of land, which costs £.760, have been sold (as for the last twelve months) at a loss of twenty-five *per cent.* the defalcation will amount to £.190, and an abatement of half the rent or £.80, would still leave the farmer minus £.110, which would be sufficient to give an effectual check to cultivation.

It is necessary to contemplate an increasing population, for which provisions can only be raised by bringing into cultivation a greater portion of the waste lands, and a reduction of rent would in this case produce no effect. The expence of cultivating those of the waste lands called cold clays, will for some years be ten times as much as the rent; and whilst the produce is selling at such a loss as is at present incurred, the sacrifice of the whole rent would present no

inducement to any rational person, to employ capital to bring them into cultivation.

It has been frequently noticed by accurate observers, that very low rents have not been favourable to good cultivation: the ambition to occupy a large extent of land, natural enough, perhaps, among farmers, induces them very frequently to take a greater number of acres than they have capital to cultivate beneficially; and where land is let at a cheap rate, this inducement to extend the quantity, rather than improve the quality, is increased; but such conduct is neither of advantage to the public, nor to individuals.

We see in many parts of England, considerable tracks of country attached to farms, under the denomination of downs, which are, perhaps, let for less than five shillings per acre, and only occupied by a flock of sheep, whose manure is used but upon a small part of the farm, which becoming, from that improvement alone, highly productive, is, perhaps, valued at five times as much as the downs: now did the tenants pay a higher rent, they would not neglect these extensive

fields, but by bringing them under the plough, to which a higher rent would compel them, raise, by the convertible system of husbandry, as much artificial green crops as would maintain their present flocks, and devote as much to the growth of corn as would be employed to feed their sheep. As rents have increased, though certainly more as agricultural capital has increased, the portion of down land destined solely for feeding sheep has diminished; and in Sussex especially, very large crops of wheat are grown on land, the fee simple of which, a few years ago, was not equal in value to a crop which in one year (moderately productive, and of medium prices) has been raised on it.

In fact, the profit of farming arises from the abundance of produce, and the abundance of produce depends more on the capital expended, than on any other circumstance. On lands of middling and inferior quality the rent is the least part of the expence, and many instances are known, where withdrawing one fourth of the capital would do more injury to the cultivator, than could be compensated by giving up the whole of the rent.

In the eastern parts of England, especially in the county of Norfolk, the rent of land has very much advanced, and that without checking the spirit of agricultural improvement; it has, perhaps, been owing to the wise policy of the great Landholders of that County in preferring tenants with abundant capital, that they have been enabled to increase so much the revenues derived from their estates. Had the tenantry been deficient in capital, though the rents had remained as they were thirty years ago, the example even of Mr. Coke would have been insufficient to create those abundant supplies of corn which have contributed to feed less improved districts.

In the cultivated parts of Scotland the rent of land is much higher than in any part of England; but owing to the liberal application of capital, which creates a most abundant produce, and to the conviction that a smaller portion of land highly cultivated, is more profitable than a larger one negligently managed, the agriculture of that country has advanced towards perfection with unexampled rapidity, in spite of an inclement climate, and a soil not naturally fertile.

In considering the present depressed state of the agricultural part of the community, our attention is necessarily directed to tithes, an incumbrance, which those who talk so lightly of reducing rents, consider with equal levity, and would, perhaps, in their speculations, as easily reduce, or even abolish. That the tithing system is an impediment to agriculture must be allowed, and if any mode could be adopted for removing the evil without violating the rights of the holders, it would be a great national benefit, and one in which the clerical proprietors would most cordially rejoice; but whatever view we take of the subject, it must appear that the right to property of that kind, is as sacred, and ought to be as carefully protected, as that of any other species whatever.

The greater part of the tithes of England are in the hands of laymen; and either they or their ancestors have paid their conventional value, the increase of which value makes it not less sacred, than if it had remained stationary; and all who have purchased or inherited property subject to tithes, have acquired it with full knowledge of that deduction from its value.

Clerical titheholders equally merit protection to their property, with laymen; their patrons acquired the right of presentation, and enjoy it under the sanction of the laws; and to deprive either the patron or the incumbent of his right would be as foul a robbery as can be committed upon property, to say nothing of the injury which would thereby be done to piety, virtue, and learning.

The system of tithes is one of the few evils, which, amidst innumerable benefits, have been transmitted to us by our ancestors. The exercise of it is sometimes accompanied with rigour by the lay-holders, less frequently so by the clerical ones; but if the whole were confiscated to the state, it would be found that the exciseman would collect one tenth of the produce with a rigidity of which, at present, we have little conception. If the tithes were conveyed to the proprietors of the land, they would more easily ascertain the value, than the present possessors, and as there would be no odium attached to them, they would, in most cases, exact more than those who at present enjoy them.

If, however, some mode could be adopted to commute tithes for an equivalent, which should entitle the possessors to all the benefits which may hereafter be derived from any increase in their value, it would be an advantageous measure; and the legislator who could contrive and accomplish such a plan, would merit the gratitude of his country.

It may appear almost ridiculous to notice an opinion, which, however, those who have conversed on the corn laws must have sometimes heard stated. It has been said that the country bankers, by the facility with which they circulate their notes, create a paper capital, which they lend to farmers, and thus enable them to withhold their produce from the markets, thereby increasing prodigiously the price to the consumer.

If it be true, which is very doubtful, that the country bankers are so accommodating to the farmers, and if the view which we take of the subject be correct, that the great desideratum to enable us to increase the produce of the land is additional capital, then it must follow, that such bankers as supply that capital, are the greatest public benefactors.

The withholding of corn from the market, which Adam Smith compares to the imaginary sin of witchcraft, and to which the country bankers are supposed to be accessary, can in no case injure the public, though, if the man who does so be mistaken, he may injure himself.

If the supply of corn be more than sufficient for the consumption, he who retains it must afterwards sell it at a lower price, and the consumer cannot thereby be injured; if a scarcity exists, he who withholds his produce does it with the expectation of selling it afterwards at a higher price, when the demand for subsistence shall become more pressing; and in doing this, acts the same part as the captain of a ship, who, on a long voyage, finding a deficiency of provisions, puts his crew on a shortened allowance very early, in order that the deficiency may be equally divided between the whole period, and thus the pressure of the scarcity be more easily endured.

In a year of actual scarcity it must be beneficial to raise the price as early as possible;

the earlier it is raised the sooner will a system of rigid econony be adopted, and the greater inducements will foreigners have to crowd to our ports with their corn. Thus, in such periods, the forestaller or withholder of corn, though he intends only to benefit himself, is really a benefactor to the public.

We have seen that the whole produce of the harvest of 1813, that has been disposed of, has been sold at an enormous loss; and though the harvest of the present year has been far below an average one, yet the quantity of grain imported, and the still greater quantity expected, has kept the price much lower than the cost to the English grower.

Whatever difference of opinion there may be as to the extent of the loss incurred by the cultivators, however near or distant the crisis may appear to which this state of things may conduct us, it will be allowed by all, that the continuance of the present state of agricultural calamity, must, as far as it does operate, be highly prejudicial to the most valuable interests of the community: that any check to the improvement of our soil, any hindrance to the increase of the necessaries of life, must,

even if it continue but for a short time, produce much durable mischief.

Whatever remedy it may be necessary to oppose to this mischief, will not admit of delay; it requires prompt and decided attention; and the evidence before the two Committees has been so copious and accurate, that no information beyond it is necessary, to determine what steps ought to be taken.

The cultivators of the land have as fair a claim to the protection and support of the government, as the manufacturers of silks, of cottons, of woollens, or of iron; and their claim is strengthened, rather than weakened, by the consideration that the articles they produce are not merely ornamental or useful, but of such indispensable necessity, that their diminution will be more severely felt by the community at large, than the absolute privation of the productions of the other classes of the community.

In urging their claims to attention and to speedy relief, they have been neither clamorous nor querulous; and the patience with which they have suffered will never be employed by a British Legislator, as an argu-

ment for suspending the relief which their condition requires, till, by petitions and complaints, they make known their distress.

From the frequent mention of the absolute prohibition to import from abroad those manufactures which may interfere with our own, an intention to recommend the exclusion of foreign corn under all circumstances, may, perhaps, be inferred; but as, from its being indispensible, there is a material difference between corn and every other production, there can be no difficulty in ascertaining when the importation of foreign corn ought to be permitted, and when it ought to be excluded from sharing the markets of Great Britain, with that which is the produce of our own soil.

It is the duty of government to afford protection to the property of its own country; and the landed and agricultural interests, though the greatest in number, the largest in value, and the principal contributors to the exigencies of the state, ought only to require that no foreigners shall, in this country, be allowed a competition with them, whilst the price of corn is lower than will afford them a

moderate profit. Whenever it is below that price, all foreign competition ought to be rigidly prohibited, and that not solely for the sake of the growers, though their condition ought to have considerable weight, but for that of the whole community, who must severely suffer from any discouragement given to cultivation.

The labours of the two Committees have sufficiently ascertained what price is at present necessary to protect the British grower of corn; and by preventing all external competition below that price, though the cultivator will not then receive the same protection as is given to other branches of industry, yet he will be satisfied, and encouraged in his pursuits.

If a year of unusual abundance occur, he will sell his produce at a reduced price, but the additional quantity will be equivalent, or nearly equivalent, to the reduction in price; but should a year of great scarcity occur, he will not receive a price sufficient to compensate for the deficiency in quantity, because, before it can reach a remunerating price, foreigners will be admitted to the market,

and prevent him from reaping the pecuniary benefit of the season. This, though an evil to the British grower, ought to be submitted to, because it is of more importance that the public should be fed, than that he should be indemnified for any loss sustained by an unpropitious season.

The only way to have a sufficiency of corn at all times is to secure a superfluity in years of ordinary productiveness; this can only be done by protecting the grower, and stimulating him to the greatest exertions, by encouraging every addition to capital employed in agriculture, so that the quantity of waste land may be diminished; and, if possible, by lessening those direct taxes which fall with weight on the agricultural interest.

If, in addition to this, the old practice of giving a bounty on the exportation of corn, when below a certain price, was resorted to, we might reasonably expect, notwithstanding our increased and increasing population, that the abundance of corn produced in ordinary years, would enable us to export large quantities, and that by stopping the exportation in unfavourable seasons, the supply arising

from former superfluity would so much lessen the pressure, as scarcely to allow it to be felt.

This was the state of affairs from the year 1697 to 1766; during the whole of which period of seventy years, only four occurred in which this country did not export more wheat than it imported, and the excess of imports above the exports in three out of those four years, only amounted to 103,198 quarters, or an average of 34,399 quarters *per annum;* whilst during the ten years from 1745 to 1754 inclusive, the exportation amounted to 4,589,004 quarters. During the whole period of seventy years the annual average of exports above imports was 203,762 quarters; whereas duriug the next forty-six years, from 1767 to 1812 inclusive, the annual average excess of imports above exports was 310,286 quarters.

If we were to judge solely from the operation of the laws during these two periods, we should conclude that the encouragement to agriculture here recommended would have the effect of reducing the price of corn; the price of wheat having been in the former period of seventy years at the annual average

of 5*s.* 2*d. per bushel;* and in the latter period of forty-six years at 8*s.* 4*d. per bushel;* but the increase of our population, the augmentation of the national debt, and the consequent weight of taxation, forbid us to form the expectation that the price of wheat can be reduced to even the latter average, for any considerable period.

If the importation be suffered to continue it will have the effect of keeping the prices down for a short time; but the defalcation in our own produce, on which we must chiefly rely, will soon create a scarcity for which no importation can compensate. As the numerous small farmers, having before that time exhausted their capital, will be incapable of raising the adequate quantity of corn, the richer cultivators, who have been enabled to bear the losses of the preceding years, will be perhaps more than compensated by the enormous prices which this scarcity will create.

Fluctuation in price, especially when so great as we have seen within the last twenty years, is a much greater calamity, than any permanent high price. The consequence to

the land-owner is difficulty in fixing rents at every renewal of leases: which, if accurately and reasonably adjusted at one time, become oppressive to one of the parties at a subsequent period. The tenants in times of depression become dispirited, the prices of labour are regulated with difficulty; when the value of produce is low, the quantity of labour is lessened, and, in consequence, tillage is neglected.

If fluctuations continue as they have done for some years past, the practice of letting lands for a term of years will probably be very considerably diminished, the farmers will become yearly tenants, and then little or no improvements will be made, the lands will either continue stationary or retrograde, for no occupier will expend capital which cannot bring him adequate returns till the expiration of three or four years, if before that time he may be removed, and another reap the benefit of his labour and expenditure.

After a period of low price, if corn rises much, the lower classes in the large towns, who are merely "*Fruges consumere nati,*" and are ignorant of the means by which they

are fed, become factious and riotous, threaten the property of the miller, the baker, and the farmer, frequently interrupt the supply of the markets, and the free circulation of grain, and sometimes place the military under the necessity of exercising the most distressing duties of their profession, by acting against a hungry mob.

These are effects which cannot be produced if prices are tolerably stationary; even if the point at which they remain should be somewhat higher than the average of years. During the last fourteen years the average price of wheat has been 11*s.* 4*d.* per bushel; within that period we have seen it as low as 7*s.* 3*d.* and as high as 22*s.* Can it be surprising that the ignorant should attribute this great difference, not to the defect of the laws, or to the variation of seasons, but to the imagined monopolizing and forestalling of the corn merchants, the farmers, the mealmen, and the bakers? Or can it be unnatural that those bent on mischief, should have availed themselves of the clamours, which such fluctuations have occasioned, to kindle the resentment of the populace against the government,

and raise themselves into notice, by directing the storm against those whom they affect to consider as enemies?

If, during the last fourteen years, the price of wheat had been nearly stationary, fluctuating only from 11*s.* to 12*s.* the bushel, would the distress we have felt in several years of that period have been experienced, or the miseries of the poor been so excessive? A nation, depending for its subsistence on foreign supply, must be peculiarly subject to great fluctuations: a winter of unusual severity, the uncertainty of the means of transport, a year of scarcity in those places from which a supply is commonly drawn, an unusual demand in other countries, or the circumstances of war or peace, must all create those irregularities in price which produce great mischief; but if to any or all of these be added an increasing deficiency at home, from the depressed condition to which the cultivators are reduced, excessive fluctuations may be followed by absolute famine, and a period of suffering be encountered, which a superabundant population would greatly aggravate.

It will, perhaps, be asked, if the whole of the corn imported from foreign countries is so disproportionate to the wants, and to the growth of this country, how can giving free permission to the import of so small a quantity, produce the evils that have been pointed out? This question is so natural that it deserves a detailed reply.

It has been before stated that the only security for a constant supply, and a price with little variation, must arise from giving to British agriculture such encouragement as will induce the capitalist to vest a portion of his money in the improvement of the land; this will increase the annual stock of agricultural produce till it reaches such a point, that in years of abundance, there shall be more than the consumption requires, in years of medium productiveness, a quantity adequate to the demand, and in the worst years, be no greater deficiency than may be supplied from the superfluity of the years of abundance: this requires such a capital as shall enable the farmer, like the merchant, to withhold his stock till the price will yield him a profit;

and in no other hands can this stock be held, but in that of the farmer; there can be no efficient store-house (as will hereafter be shown) but in his stack-yard. Were sufficient capital vested in land, this course could not be pursued whilst the importation of foreign corn is admitted; no man will withhold his corn in years of plenty, if he knows that before it reaches a price to repay him, an unknown, and therefore magnified quantity, may be brought from some other country, and prevent him from reaping that fair compensation for the inactivity of his capital, to which, with every other man, he is entitled.

Withholding corn in years of abundance, as a resource against future years of scarcity, that wise policy, which we are told in sacred writ was recommended to the King of Egypt by divine inspiration, is here rendered impracticable, by the habit of depending on other countries. In a year of the greatest abundance, the apprehension of what may be imported creates a panic, that deters every one from holding a stock; the markets become crowded with sellers, the prices are

depressed, low prices lead to profusion; that which should be hoarded, is dissipated; and when a season of scarcity returns, instead of having a supply at home, we are under the necessity of ransacking every part of the Globe, to furnish our population with food at enormous prices, which timely economy and prudence would have enabled us to have preserved in our own stores, and to have dispensed at moderate rates.

If foreign corn were excluded, except in years of scarcity, which the price would early indicate, the unoccupied capital of the farmer, and sometimes of the speculator, would be employed in purchasing corn in cheap seasons; it would be withdrawn from the market till it was wanted, and then it would seasonably come forth, and, like Pharaoh's seven years store, make food moderately plentiful, without depending on the uncertainty of extraneous supply.

It has been the policy of some small states, both in ancient and modern times, to lay up in store-houses, at the expence of the government, a stock of corn sufficient to meet the wants of the people, on every return of

unfruitful years. It is not worth discussing how far such a system was beneficial in the cases in which it was adopted, as it is only practicable in countries, whose government is richer in proportion to its population, than in any of the larger kingdoms of Europe. In this country to do it effectually, a sum must be raised either by loans, or by taxes, to which the government is totally incompetent; but such a quantity of corn divided among fifty thousand occupiers and proprietors of land, had they sufficient capital (and the capital is only withheld from the apprehension of foreign competition) would benefit themselves, and enable them to serve the country when it stood in its greatest need.

Our fluctuations and our scarcities have arisen from our having no accumulation of corn; from our trusting each year to the produce of the preceding one, and not daring, till compelled by necessity, to contemplate that, which, in a series of years, must occur,—a season of scarcity; but as we ought to look forward to a return of such seasons, we should now determine, whether we will meet them in future, as we have hitherto done,

unprepared and unprovided, or by giving security to the agriculturists of this kingdom against foreign competition, encourage a sufficiency of capital to flow in that channel, till our average harvests shall equal our consumption, and till the farmers, the only natural preservers of the surplus, shall be enabled to hold it till adverse seasons shall require and repay their prudence and foresight.

The erection of national granaries, which has been recommended, when under the pressure of scarcity we could feel but not reason, has not been lately proposed; but whenever want shall again be felt, we shall probably have it urged with the usual pertinacity.

On such a subject we cannot do better than quote the words of that great man, who illuminated every subject that he touched; and though the quotation be long, there is no danger of its tiring the reader: "I hear that a measure has been proposed, and is under deliberation; that is, for government to set up a granary in every market town, at the expence of the State, in order to extinguish

the dealer, and to subject the farmer to the consumer, by securing corn to the latter, at a certain and steady price. If such a scheme is adopted, I should not like to answer for the safety of the granary, of the agents, or of the town itself in which the granary was erected, — the first storm of popular frenzy would fall on that granary.

" So far in a political light. In an œconomical light, I must observe, that the construction of such granaries throughout the kingdom, would be at an expence beyond all calculation. The keeping them up would be at a great charge. The management and attendance would require an army of storekeepers, clerks, and servants. The capital to be employed in the purchase of grain would be enormous. The waste, decay, and corruption, would be a dreadful drawback on the whole dealing, and the dissatisfaction of the people at having decayed, tainted, or corrupted corn sold to them, as must be the case, would be serious.

" The climate (whatever others may be) is not favourable to granaries, where wheat is to be kept for any time. The best, and

indeed the only good granary is the rick-yard of the farmer, where the corn is preserved in its own straw, sweet, clean, and wholesome, free from vermin and from insects, and comparatively at a trifle of expence. This, and the barn, enjoying many of the same advantages, have been the sole granaries of England from the foundation of its agriculture to this day. All this is done at the expence of the undertaker, and at his sole risk. He contributes to government, he receives nothing from it but protection, and to this he has a claim.

" The moment that government appears at market, all the principles of the market will be subverted. I don't know whether the farmer will suffer by it, as long as there is a tolerable market of competition; but I am sure that in the first place, the trading government will speedily become a bankrupt, and the consumer in the end will suffer. If government makes all its purchases at once, it will instantly raise the market on itself. If it makes them by degrees, it must follow the course of the market. If it follows the course of the market, it will produce no effect, and

the consumer may as well buy as he wants—therefore all the expence is incurred *gratis*.

" But if the object of this scheme should be to destroy the dealer, commonly called the middle man, and by incurring a voluntary loss to carry the baker to deal with government, I am to tell them that they must set up another trade, that of a miller, or a mealman, attended with a new train of expences and risks. If in both these trades they should succeed, so as to exclude those who trade on natural and private capitals, then they will have a monopoly in their hands, which under the appearance of a monopoly of capital, will in reality be a monopoly of authority, and will ruin whatever it touches. The agriculture of the kingdom cannot stand before it." *Burke's Thoughts and Details on Scarcity.*

The introduction of a quantity of foreign corn which though not large, in comparison with our annual consumption, is so as it regards the temporary demand, is felt severely by the more indigent class of farmers. To pay their rent, and to discharge their annual bills, such men are obliged to sell a large

proportion of their corn, between the harvest and the end of the year; the same necessity prompts the continental farmers to send their produce early to market; these two classes thus meeting at the same period create a competition very injurious to our smaller agriculturists, which, by rendering the poor still poorer, tends to hasten the period when they must descend to the condition of day-labourers; whilst those, who, with more ample means, are enabled to protract the time of sale till the foreign competition is over, obtain prices approaching nearer to the cost of their produce, and though better enabled to bear a loss, suffer less than their more indigent neighbours.

The depression of the market by the introduction of foreign grain at the precise moment when it is most injurious, is increased from its being almost wholly imported into London, whose prices affect all the country markets, and extend the evil far beyond the immediate vicinity that is supplied by foreigners.

A writer, who has obtained considerable celebrity by his work on the Principle of Population, in his observations on the corn

laws, has, without sufficient examination, expressed an opinion, that "in the present state of things we must give up the idea of creating a large average surplus of corn:" if he means large, in comparison with our consumption, there can be no reason to refuse acquiescence in the opinion; but if he means large, in proportion to the quantity we have imported, even on an average of the worst seven years we have ever experienced, there can be no doubt that he has been misinformed in his facts, or hasty in his conclusions.

The period of the greatest importation of wheat was from 1796 to 1802 inclusive: during that time our whole importation, including what came from Ireland, was 4,159,752 quarters, forming an annual average of 594,270 quarters. Let us suppose, that to have always a surplus, it is necessary to augment the quantity grown at home by double as much as we have imported in these worst periods, and that, to provide for a still increasing population, it is necessary to grow half as much more as our imports were, this would make our requisite average growth about 1,500,000 quarters of wheat greater

than it was in the worst seven years we have ever experienced; and as this increase would supersede the necessity of importation, would afford a fund for exportation of equal amount, and still suffice for any reasonable increase of inhabitants, it is important to ascertain, how we can increase the growth one tenth of our average crops of the last twenty years, or one eighth of the average of the seven most unproductive years.

It has been stated by the most experienced agriculturists that the lands of Great Britain, instead of being capable of augmenting their growth of corn one eighth or one tenth, are susceptible of improvements which would increase their production full one third beyond what they at present yield; and a very cursory review of our agricultural resources will shew that they have not been too sanguine in their calculations.

The best tillage lands in the kingdom have not yet, by any means, reached their *ne plus ultra* of cultivation; and improvements may be made on the best managed properties which would carry their produce to a degree far beyond what they have yet reached.

The increase of green crops, additional stercoration, with a better rotation of crops, would undoubtedly afford more sustenance for man and beast, than is at present raised, and the lands, instead of being exhausted, would become improved by each successive series of crops.

We have in all parts of Great Britain, but principally in England, a great quantity of lands in permanent pasture, which requiring less capital than tillage, a greater number of tenants are capable of occupying them: this creating a greater competition for them than exists for tillage lands, the proprietors obtain higher rents in proportion to their intrinsic value.

Of these lands, more than five millions of acres might be brought under the plough, and, by adopting on them the convertible system of husbandry, they would be enabled to support a proportion of cattle equal to that which they at present maintain, besides a large quantity of corn raised in successive crops, which would be clear gain to the general subsistence. Clover, turnips, tares, ruta baga, mangel wurzel, and other plants,

will produce more food for cattle on one acre, if well cultivated, than two acres of grass land of equal quality will afford: if then these were grown in alternate years, and the intervals occupied in raising corn crops, the whole of the lands so circumstanced, would contribute a supply of corn more than equal to all our wants, in the most calamitous season.

It may, perhaps, be objected, that these five millions of permanent pasture would produce less to the landlord under the plough, than in their present state; but if we consider the high rents paid for land in Scotland, by those who have best practised the convertible husbandry, our apprehensions on that head will be removed.

Prices are there given for whole farms, as high as are paid in England for some of the best meadow lands, and the occupiers, besides the interest on their capitals, have made larger profits than have commonly accrued in England from the richest pastures.

The improved condition of many of the downs in Sussex, and the sands of Norfolk, shows what may be accomplished on the

extensive tracts of land of those descriptions, which in the various counties of England remain at present under a system of husbandry, very little beneficial either to the occupiers or to the community.

The commons and wastes, which with proper protection might be made tolerably productive, will add their share to the mass of additional subsistence; for though at present the operations of inclosing and cultivating them are suspended, such encouragement as might be afforded without injuring any of the great interests of the community, would again give life and vigour to the possessors, and the spirit of improvement would proceed with its former alacrity.

In this review Ireland must not be overlooked: some of the English cultivators, indeed, regard that country with a degree of jealousy which she does not merit, and apprehend from the cheapness of labour, and the freedom from poor's rates, and various other imposts which the English farmer pays, she may increase her productions to such a degree, as to send corn here at a much lower price than it can cost the English grower,

and thereby produce the same calamity, as he now suffers by a competition with the foreign agriculturist. It should, however, be remembered, that Great Britain and Ireland are so united that the prosperity of either, must benefit both, and that, improved as Irish agriculture has been, and as it is hoped it will continue to be, a long time must elapse before such an addition to our supply can come from thence, as to warrant the feeling here reprobated. The more rapidly Ireland increases in agricultural prosperity, the sooner she will be enabled to bear a share of the public burdens more nearly approaching to her proportion of population, than she does at present, and the stimulus applied to the agriculture of Ireland, by exporting to Great Britain annually, as she now does, 100,000 qrs. of wheat, and 400,000 qrs. of other corn, free of duty, or even double that quantity, ought not to be withheld or be clogged by countervailing duties, equivalent to the difference of taxation between the two kingdoms.

Dismissing, then, all ideas of rivalry between two countries, whose interest in most points is the same, we may look to the

picture given us by the report of the Corn Committee of 1813 with much satisfaction, as it presents us with the prospect that our sister kingdom will so improve her genial soil, as to meliorate the condition of the great body of her labourers, and yet afford considerable aid, if necessary, to the wants of Great Britain.

In describing the agricultural resources of this country it is difficult not to be diffusive: the powers we possess of increasing subsistence are so great, that it would occupy a volume to enumerate and illustrate them all; but the slight view we have taken of the most prominent points is sufficient to shew, that with proper encouragement, a population very far exceeding our present numbers might be easily supported from our own soil.

It will be natural to inquire, what kind and degree of encouragement is requisite to increase our means of subsistence to such a state, that we shall not only have sufficient to support our own inhabitants, but, in years of abundance, a large surplus.

During the last twenty years, whilst our population has gone on increasing, our means

of feeding that population must have kept nearly an equal pace, or we should have felt more difficulty than we have done in providing for its necessities. The inducements which have prompted this increase of agriculture must have been the advances of price. As the average price of wheat during those twenty years was only 10*s.* 1*d.* *per* bushel, we may conclude that price is sufficiently high to maintain our agriculture at a point capable of producing food for the consumption of fifty weeks in the year, this being actually the case during the period; our importation (inclusive of Ireland) being on an average only 479,086 qrs. of wheat, and 442,785 qrs. of other corn, or two weeks consumption.

But we are to ascertain, not what will keep the agriculture of the country nearly stationary, but what will augment it from an average supply for fifty weeks consumption, to an average of fifty-five or fifty-six weeks, which would enable us to export corn to the full extent of what during the period of twenty years we have imported.

If we consider the great additional quantity of land, brought under tillage in the period

of fourteen years, ending with 1812, and the consequent growth produced by the harvests of 1812 and 1813, and recollect that the average price of wheat during that term was 11*s.* 4*d.* *per* bushel, we may fairly conclude, that this price is a sufficient stimulus to bring our agricultural produce to the quantity required.

The sufficiency of this price is confirmed, by the fact that the great increase in the number of inclosure bills began in the year 1807, before wheat had risen to the price of 11*s.* 4*d.*, and those bills were, probably, projected on a calculation of the five years immediately preceding, in which the average was somewhat lower.

Assuming, then, that an average price of about 11*s.* *per* bushel for wheat, and the correspondent prices for other grain, will be a sufficient stimulus to the cultivator to increase his productions, and an inducement to the capitalist to invest larger portions of his money in agricultural pursuits; and presuming, that by legislative restrictions on foreign corn, and bounties on our own, it may be kept at that price with little variation, we may

proceed to inquire what interests of the community will thereby be affected.

It is a step of some, though not of much importance, in this inquiry to ascertain how much higher this presumed price of 11*s.* *per* bushel is, than that of the same quantity in the different countries on the continent of Europe. It must be owned that our means of information on this subject are very slight, and it does not appear to have attracted the attention of the Committees so much as might have been wished.

Mr. Arthur Young stated before the Committee of the House of Commons, on the authority of his son, recently returned after a residence of nine years in Russia, that the price of corn there had been gradually rising; and that, taking two averages, one from 1781 to 1782, and the other from 1790 to 1803, the price of the latter period was about 40 *per cent.* above that of the former, which is the same increase as has taken place in England in the two respective periods; if the same should have occurred in the other parts of Europe, the increase in England becomes of less consequence.

By the list of prices at Dantzic, as given by Mr. Wilson, a considerable corn-factor, it appears that in the year 1803, wheat was at nearly the same price as in England; that in 1804 it was somewhat higher, in 1805 about one shilling and sixpence lower, and in June of this year about two shillings lower. These are indeed but slight data on which to form a calculation; but as far as they go, they establish one fact, that the price at Dantzic, though from local or temporary circumstances it may be occasionally higher than in England, is not, when our ports are open for importation, at a much lower rate, than the expences of freight, insurance, and other charges of conveyance to England.

It may, perhaps, be said that from the rate of exchange being unfavourable to us, the difference in price appears less than it really is; but it seems to be agreed by all the evidence, that as the rate of exchange has become more favourable to us, the price of wheat abroad has increased.

The prices at Konigsberg and at Hamburg, according to the accounts from those ports, do not vary much from those of

Dantzic, and seem to be scarcely more than the amount of freight and charges, below the current prices of England; and as far as private information can be depended on, the wheat which has been imported from France, Flanders, and Holland, since the peace, has not left a large profit to the importers.

Though Spain cannot be deemed a country deserving great consideration, in this particular point of view, it may not be unworthy attention, that the price of wheat has there, as in England, been gradually rising. Taking two averages of six years each, the first from 1793 to 1798, and the second from 1799 to 1804, the average price of wheat of the latter period above the former, was about 58 *per cent.* and the increase in the price of barley, in the same time, was about 40 *per cent.* As oats are but little grown in the peninsula, but barley is used for feeding horses, we have no list of their prices.

If importation was forbidden in England, the prices might fall in those countries which have hitherto supplied us; but there is no reason to believe that wheat could, under any circumstances, fall on an average of

years much below 6*s*. 6*d*. *per* bushel, in the parts of the continent accessible to navigation, even if there was no demand for Spain and Portugal.

Provisions of all kinds have for many years past been much dearer in England than on the continent, and they must ever be dearer in a rich than in a poor country; we may, then, ask what injury would be sustained by any of the important interests of this kingdom, if, whilst wheat is at 6*s*. 6*d*. per bushel on the continent, it should be at 11*s*. in Great Britain?

It appears almost superfluous to assert, that the great mass of the inhabitants of this island, those who subsist by their daily labour, cannot be injured by such a state of things; for it is well known that, if the price of corn does not immediately, and in its full extent, regulate the price of labour, it has a certain and gradual influence upon it. Corn is supposed to constitute half the expenditure of a labourer's family; and it has been generally remarked, that something near to this calculation has usually regulated the price of agricultural labour: if when

wheat was at 10*s*. *per* bushel the day's work was valued at 2*s*., when it rose to 20*s*. the day's work became worth 3*s*: if rent, clothing, fuel, and those articles which constitute the other half of the expenditure, remained as before.—Labour, like every other commodity, will, indeed, be in a great degree governed by the want, or the abundance, of it; now if the agriculture of the country be depressed, there will be less demand for labour, and the price will fall. If agriculture be flourishing, the demand for labour will be greater, and the price will rise; and these effects will extend from the agricultural to the manufacturing poor; if the number of the unemployed labourers be excessive, it will depress the wages of the artisans, by filling the lower departments in the manufactories, which require strength more than skill, with a superabundance; whilst the less skilful will encroach a little on their superiors, till the effect becomes general on all who exist by their labour. On the other hand, if there be a scarcity of agricultural labourers, the lower class of manufacturers will transfer their labour to the farms, and the value of

the skill of all classes of artisans will be increased.

It has, indeed, been stated that if corn be higher in England, than in other countries, labour will also be higher; that this will, by increasing the price, obstruct the sale of our exportable commodities; and that this evil may be ultimately so great, as to counterbalance the effects of our extraordinary skill, capital, and machinery.

This view of the subject having been brought forward by an author of the merited reputation of Mr. Malthus, requires to be discussed more at large, than if it had been stated by an inferior writer.

Before entering particularly and minutely into this subject, it may not be improper to remark that, during the whole progress of the increase of our exportable commodities, the prices both of provisions and labour in the manufacturing countries on the continent have been full as much lower than those in England, as they would be if wheat was here at 11*s.* and in those other countries at 6*s.* 6*d.* In spite of this continual difference, our exportable commodities have increased; and there

can then be no reason to conclude that the continuance of the same difference will alone create any considerable defalcation. It may be farther remarked, that at or after periods of high prices of corn, exportations have not diminished, nor have they increased with low prices.

Political events of various kinds may, indeed, to a great extent influence the quantity of British exports, and cause a considerable diminution in their amount: for this every one must be prepared, who considers that the supply of the French and Dutch colonies has lately been almost monopolized by our manufacturers, but that from those markets, they will, probably, be wholly excluded in future. If the government of Portugal should return from Brazil to Europe, and the former country be placed under the old colonial system, a considerable diminution in the consumption of our manufactures must take place in that quarter. If the settlements of Spain, in the western world, return under subjection to the mother country, that circumstance would also considerably lessen the exporta-

tion of our manufactures. But, above all, the state of the countries of Europe, which, from having been so long occupied in war, have had no inducement to carry on any but the indispensable domestic manufactures, being now materially changed, and tranquillity restored to them, will tend to lessen our exports of all kinds. In Spain this has already begun to operate, to the exclusion of cotton goods. Some of the capital of France, Flanders, Holland, and Germany, will doubtless be turned to manufacturing articles for exportation, which may in time supplant ours in some of the markets, of which we have lately had exclusive possession. Though these effects may be produced, and even to a very alarming extent, they have nothing to do with our view of the subject; they would take place, even if corn and labour could be kept down in England to as low a price as they are in the other countries of Europe.

In considering our exports, we may take the year 1810 as the standard; because, with one exception, it is that in which their amount was greatest, and consequently the

most unfavourable to the argument we mean to pursue. We shall consider not the *official*, but the *real* value, according to the estimate presented by the Customs to the House of Commons, and which was ordered to be printed the 16th of June, 1812.

It appears that in the year 1810, our exports had attained the highest point, and amounted to the sum of £.62,702,409. Of this sum the amount of the foreign productions which were re-exported, including refined sugar, was £.15,307,755, leaving the amount of British produce and manufactures exported at £.47,304,654, the price of which consisted more or less of British labour, and might therefore be susceptible of increase or diminution in cost, according to the high or low price of that labour.

It is a circumstance highly favourable to our manufactures, that a very considerable part of them is guarded by such restrictions and monopolies, that no foreign competition can prevent their consumption to a very great extent; and thus any small increase of price, arising from a higher rate of labour, will scarcely diminish that consumption.

The countries to which British produce or manufactures were exported, without fear of rivalry, and the amount sent to them in the year under consideration, was as follows:

Ireland, Guernsey, Jersey, and the Isle of Man, -	4,214,513
East Indies, - - -	2,977,366
Africa, - - - -	595,031
West Indies, - - -	9,176,552
British America, - - -	7,601,227
	24,564,689

It thus appears, that in the year 1810, the amount of British produce and manufactures exported to countries, where no rival competitors can meet us, exceeded that which was exported to parts of the world where such competition may hereafter arise. In the preceding and subsequent years this excess has been much greater.

Our whole produce and manufactures exported to countries where others can rival us, amounted in the greatest year to £.22,739,965; this amount has since been considerably reduced, and that by circumstances totally independent of the price of British labour.

The war which so long desolated Spain, having destroyed her internal manufactures, and deranged the affairs of the Phillipine company, caused a vent in that country for the cottons of Great Britain, of which our merchants eagerly availed themselves, and crowded every part of the peninsula with the produce of our looms. The circumstances which have recently occurred, oblige us to expect, that, in future, there will be no exportation of British cottons to Spain, excepting small quantities, which may be introduced by illicit trade: we may then reasonably calculate, that a defalcation will take place in our exports of cottons alone, to the amount of what was sent to Spain in the two years of 1809 and 1810, when the party in opposition to France opened the ports to our fabrics.

This amounted on the average of the two years to £.4,630,420, a deficiency we can in no other quarter expect to make up, for, though the ports in the north of Europe are open to our ships, the prohibitions opposed to our cotton as well as woollen goods exist

in the Austrian and Prussian dominions*, and if Saxony becomes dependent on either of those powers, no doubt can be entertained, that the same prohibitions will be adopted to favour the manufactures of that country.

On account of the number and powers of our mills for spinning, and the capitals of their owners, we may increase our export of cotton yarn, but to no amount that can compensate for the deficient export of the finished goods. During the whole period of the war, and when our exclusion from the continent was the most rigid, the exportation of cotton yarn varied less than that of any other article; and if it should now increase, which is highly probable, it will operate, as far as it goes, to diminish the exportation of those

* The following anecdote will show the rigid system adopted by the Prussian government towards British manufactures. The author, a few years ago, on entering Berlin, had his carriage searched at the gate, and the officer having found in one of the pockets an article of dress, made of English kerseymere, which had never been worn, seized it, and sent it to the Pack-hoff, and though on an introduction to the minister Struensee, it was allowed to be given up, on satisfying the officer, it was not delivered to the owner in the Prussian dominions, but sent to Brunswick by the post to meet him there.

goods made in Great Britain from yarn spun here.

We cannot, then, calculate on less than the sum of £.4,630,000, as the probable deduction from the amount of our exports in 1810; and there will then remain, as nearly as can be calculated, an average exportation of British produce and manufactures, to countries, in which foreign competition creates a rivalry, of the value of £.18,109,000. Various other articles, the produce of this island, but rather raw materials than manufactures, must make a still farther deduction from the amount of those exportable commodities, in which we need fear no rivalry. Coals, salt, lead, tin, and many small articles, experience no competition, as they are exported to countries which can be nowhere else so well supplied with them; these will amount to at least £.1,000,000, and reduce the last valuation to £.17,100,000.

It is now necessary to proceed another step, and endeavour to ascertain, what is the value of the human labour expended in manufacturing the articles for which this sum of £.17,000,000 is paid. The amount of

cotton wool imported into this country in six years, from 1805 to 1810, both years inclusive, was 465,772,000 pounds, or an average of 77,628,000 pounds annually. Estimating this at 2*s.* 6*d.* per pound, it would amount to £.9,750,000. The value of the cotton goods, including cotton yarn, exported in the same series of years, amounts to an annual sum of £.15,279,000. It is usually estimated, that of the cottons manufactured in Great Britain, three fifths are consumed out of the kingdom; if this be correct, and it cannot be far removed from the truth, our internal consumption of £.10,000,000, would, when added to the quantity exported, show that from about £.10,000,000 of raw materials, we create goods to the amount of £.25,000,000. To the raw material, however, must be added the cost of the various bleaching and dyeing drugs, and of the coals used in the manufactory, all which cannot be over-rated at £.1,000,000. The profits of the merchant or wholesale dealer, on the whole sum vended, will be nearly the same, whether provisions be higher or lower here than on the continent of Europe; and in estimating it at 5 *per cent.* on

the total of the manufacture or £.1,500,000, which cannot exceed the amount, it would appear that the labour is half the value of the sum for which the cotton goods are sold.

If the amount of the labour be one half, or fifty *per cent,* on the sale price of the goods, we must next estimate what part of that labour is performed by machinery. In goods of the finer quality, such as the superior kinds of muslin, almost the whole value arises from the fineness of the spinning, which does not depend on human labour, but on machinery, and, consequently, in that description of goods, the value of more than half the labour depends rather on the capital employed, than on the price of the food consumed by the working people. Almost all the inferior branches of the cotton manufacture are executed by mechanism as far as the spinning goes, and it is well known that, except in some few articles, the spinning costs more than the whole of the other labour. It will not, then, be improper to estimate the value of the labour which does not depend on the price of food, as equal to that which fluctuates with provisions.

Supposing we have made no material error in this calculation, we arrive at the conclusion, that in the cotton manufacture the amount of that portion of labour which depends on the price of the subsistence of the labourer, is one quarter, or twenty-five *per cent*, on the price at which the goods are sold when finished.

It has been calculated with much pains and acuteness by Sir F. M. Eden, that the purchasing of corn is nearly one half the expenditure of the family of the labourer; and thus, if his rent, fuel, cloathing, and the other parts of his expences, continue the same, and they are little liable to fluctuation, the increase or depression in the price of corn can affect only one half the value of his labour, and, consequently, one half of his subsistence, and thus only twelve and a half *per cent* of the selling price of the goods, will be affected by the fluctuations in the price of corn.

An author of Glasgow, not disposed to lessen the importance of the cotton manufacture, stated a few years since the sum annually paid for wages in that branch to be £.13,000,000. If this be a correct state-

ment, and we have no reason to attempt to represent it as less than this sum, we may calculate that subsequent circumstances have increased it to about £.15,000,000. According to our view of the subject, then, the value of wages will be

Consumed by the inhabitants of	
Great Britain - -	6,000,000
——— by monopolized foreign markets - -	3,600,000
——— by foreign markets of competition - -	5,400,000

As we cannot estimate the wages of each individual, including children, occupied in this manufacture at less than £.10 *per annum*, the number employed in producing goods for open foreign markets will be 540,000, or one twenty-sixth part of the population, whilst those occupied in supplying the other two markets will amount to nearly one million.

Let us suppose this number of individuals may consume annually one quarter of wheat, or an equivalent quantity of other grain; if this 540,000 quarters of wheat were to be increased in price 20*s.* per quarter, and the

whole of that price to become an addition to the cost of the goods, amounting to 9,000,000 exported to markets of competition, it would advance them about 6 *per cent.*

Though we have thus allowed the fact assumed by the Glasgow manufacturer, there may be considerable reason to doubt its accuracy, and perhaps, it might be possible to prove, as clearly as such subjects admit of proof, that he has greatly overstated the amount of wages actually paid; if, however, his statement be true, as our amount of imported raw material, and of exported goods, are drawn from official sources, and may therefore be relied on, it will follow that the amount of goods manufactured is much larger than we have estimated it; and then this consequence will result, that we have calculated the home consumption too low, and that, in reality, it exceeds the whole of the foreign consumption.

If, then, so small a portion as one eighth part of this branch of our exportable manufactures is affected by the price of corn, and if that price be one half as much more in this island as it is in the countries which

will attempt to compete with us, the only effect will be, that our cotton goods will meet theirs in the open markets at a cost about four *per cent.* higher than that of our rivals.

If, however, the price of corn in Great Britain should be double that which it bears in the country of the rival manufacturers, the effect would be, that British goods would arrive at the market costing about six *per cent.* more than those of their competitors.

As the machinery used to abridge human labour is in some measure composed of that labour, it may be reckoned that it will be affected by the price of provisions, and therefore, some allowance must be made for it.

The most costly parts of every factory are the stream of water, the rights of which are frequently very valuable, and the buildings for the reception of the machinery, which, together generally constitute from one half to two thirds of the whole expence, and the interest on this capital will form a large portion of the price of the work executed, which will not be affected by any fluctuation in the price of corn.

As, however, it is undoubtedly proper to make some allowance, it will perhaps be sufficient to calculate that the work performed by machinery is liable to be affected by the price of corn, to the extent of one half of what we have calculated its effect to be on that portion produced simply by human labour. In this view the whole increase in the cost price of the finished goods would be six *per cent.* if corn is one third higher, or nine *per cent.* if double the price in England that it is in the rival countries.

Need we ask if the capital, and the skill of this country, with previous possession of the habits of the people for whom such articles are destined, will more than counterbalance such a difference as this amounts to?

It has been deemed necessary to enter more minutely into this branch of our exportable produce, because it forms by far the largest in our class of commodities for foreign use, and is the only one, of which the external exceeds the internal consumption; it is also the one in which the price of corn (allowing it to have as much influence as some suppose) may be presumed

to produce the greatest effect, because the portion of labour in its production is greater, in proportion to the raw material, than in most of the other important kinds of goods which we export*.

A more cursory view of the other branches of our exportable commodities will suffice, after the long detail which the cotton branch has occupied, especially as, in general, the proportion which the raw material bears to human labour, though varying in each, may on the average be brought to the same standard without any important error.

Our woollens of all kinds, except the thinner sorts of stuffs, have a proportion of raw materials exceeding the value of the labour; and though great improvements have been made, and, in spite of clamour and opposition, are likely to proceed, the quantity of

* In attempting to calculate the effect of this large branch of manufacture, we have no disposition to lessen its importance, or to deny its beneficial effect as a source of national wealth, though it may be contended, that it has not contributed to produce a healthy, a virtuous, and, consequently, a happy population, or, though it may be denied, that its importance is such as to justify the payment of £.350,000 annually in bounties, to encourage the exportation of a small part of it.

labour performed by hand, especially in the coarser goods, bears a greater proportion to that performed by machinery than in the cotton manufactories; but these circumstances taken together, would lead to the same conclusion upon the effect produced on the goods by the price of corn in a foreign market, where rivals are to be encountered. This branch differs materially from the cotton, as two thirds of the raw material is the product of our own soil, and two thirds of the consumption is within the Island of Great Britain.

The next production in amount is that of hardware, including iron, raw and wrought, and the various articles of cutlery, toys, and trinkets, which give support to those populous places Birmingham, Sheffield, and the towns and villages in their vicinity. In these articles the cost of the raw material is trifling; and the labour principally performed by machinery, in that exported, is the greater portion of their expence. Though we have stated these articles as manufactured at Birmingham and Sheffield, it is material to remark, they are confined to no one part of the

Island, but carried on in every town, village, and hamlet in the Kingdom; and the internal consumption is supposed to be ten times the value of the whole that is exported. That portion made by the country smith, the larger part of the manufacture, is composed almost wholly of human labour; but in that which forms the exportable part, the use of machinery is, perhaps, greater than in any other branch of industry, and therefore the price of corn can have no more, or very little more influence than in the two other branches which we have reviewed.

The manufacturers of linen, glass, and earthen ware, leather, stationary, silks, and many smaller ones, whose bare enumeration would be tiresome, may be classed under the same description as hardware, as far as regards the proportion between internal consumption and exportation. The proportion which foreigners take of them is so trifling, that if the whole trade to other countries, excepting that to our own settlements, were destroyed, the loss would scarcely be felt by the manufacturers. Taking them altogether it will be a just calculation that the price of

corn influencing the price of labour to the full extent of its cost, produces no greater effect on those goods in the markets, where rivals may compete with us, than it does in those articles composed of cotton.

Thus far we have been proceeding, upon the supposition that the wages of manufacturing labour are regulated by the price of corn, and to the full extent of all the variations of which corn is susceptible. But this is by no means the case; the price of labour, like every other commodity, is regulated by its own abundance or scarcity, as has been most luminously shown in the evidence of Lord Lauderdale and Mr. Milne, which they both confirmed by delivering to the Committee the prices of labour, compared with that of corn, in several periods, showing that abundance of employment, and not advance in corn, is the real cause of a rise in the wages of manufacturers.

To put the case in the way most favourable to those who erroneously suppose that our manufacturers will be injured by corn being at a higher price in Great Britain than it is on the Continent, it has been thought proper

to enter into this calculation, to show, even upon that supposition, how insignificant and trifling an effect will be produced.

If we now calculate that proportion of our various manufactures which is consumed by the people of this kingdom, and compare it with that which is sent to those markets where foreigners can rival us, we shall be able to judge which is most injurious to our manufacturers, their paying such a price for corn as will enable the landed proprietors and occupiers to exist with their accustomed comfort, or such a price as, whilst it reduces their income and expenditure, shall enable the small quantity of our productions which go to markets of competition, to meet their rivals there on terms a little lower than they otherwise would do.

We have already estimated the internal customers of the cotton trade as purchasers to the amount of 10,000,000 annually, and the foreign as 15,000,000; of the latter sum about 6,000,000 are exported to our own dominions, where we have no rivals, and about 9,000,000 may be sent to countries where they may meet competitors, either as in the

United States of America, where internal manufactories have begun to be established, or from France and the other countries of Europe. In the first case we shall have to contend with those who have not attained to our perfection in taste or skill, who have not, and cannot, carry the division of labour to the same extent, and who must pay for all manual labour prices far beyond what are given in this Kingdom, notwithstanding the cheapness of provisions. In the second case we shall have to contend with those who are ignorant of the fancies and caprices of the consumers, who labour under the disadvantages of their customers, being prejudiced in favour of their rivals, who have not capital sufficient to enable them to purchase the raw material so cheap, or to give such extensive credit, and who will, in fact, have nothing in their favour, but that they can procure the mere manual labour, the smallest portion of the cost, on terms lower than their competitors.

Can there be any reason for apprehension that, in these circumstances, this branch of our exportable commodities, the most of all exposed to suffer, will sustain any diminution?

Is it probable that it can suffer in its sales so much, as it will do if the landed and agricultural parts of the home consumers are depressed? Will not such depression in the circumstances of those who consume 10,000,000 in value of these commodities, be more felt by the cotton manufacturers, than any defalcation that is likely to happen in the markets of competition in foreign Countries?

We have before asserted, that two thirds of the consumers of woollen cloths are at home. In fact their exportation to all foreign markets does not amount to more than 4,500,000, whilst at home their sales amount to at least 12,000,000: thus they will have as little to dread from rivalry abroad as the cotton manufacturers, and will suffer in a much greater degree, by the reduced condition of their principal customers in the home market.

In continuing this contrast, and carrying it through the hardware, linen, leather, glass, paper, silk, and other minuter manufactures, which form the total of British exports, we shall find the internal consumption amount to ten times the value of that which is vended in the foreign markets; and may therefore conclude, that they will be more deeply

affected by injury done to the landholders, cultivators, and labourers of Great Britain, than by any evil they would sustain from a curtailment of their sales in other countries.

The internal traders, from the wholesale dealer to the village huckster, can feel but little bad effects from corn being higher in England than on the Continent; but, on the other hand, by corn being kept at a price which creates a loss to the grower, their best customers, the landed proprietors, their tenants, and labourers, will be unable to expend the sums they have been accustomed to do, and thus this description of people must become sufferers to a greater extent than they will be benefited by buying bread somewhat cheaper.

The homely adage that "England is England's best customer" is so obvious, that the foregoing details can only be supposed necessary from the frequent allusion to the export of our manufactures, and from their increase or diminution being represented as decisive proofs of our national prosperity or adversity. That it may be a proof, to a certain extent, cannot be denied; but if

it be put in competition with the internal consumption, its importance will be very much diminished.

The public creditors, the holders of the funds, require our consideration, and we may ask, how are they injured by maintaining the price of corn in this kingdom as high as is requisite to repay the grower of it for his capital and his labour, even though it should be considerably higher than in neighbouring countries? The greater part of the public funds have been created within the last twenty years: during that period the average price of wheat, in this country, has been 11*s. per* bushel, a price nearly sufficient to remunerate the grower at this time; now if it should remain stationary, at the price which it bore when the capital was converted into an annuity, their situation will remain unaltered, as to the relative value of their capital to corn, and they will have no reason to complain.

If, on the other hand, the price of corn be so low as not to repay the growers, if they, as well as their landlords, become in consequence so depressed as to be compelled to cultivate less, and to diminish the consump-

tion of taxable commodities, the defalcation in revenue will compel the Government to borrow annually large sums to make up the deficiency, loans will necessarily tend to diminish the value of the public funds, and thus the funded proprietor, though his annuity may remain the same, will find, whenever he wishes to sell it, that his capital is greatly reduced.

The money price of one species of property is very materially affected by that of every other; if we could suppose the whole of the funded property of the kingdom to be annihilated, the effect would be to lower the money price of land, of houses, of cattle, of corn, and every other commodity. If any other large mass of property were to be annihilated, the effect would be the same, according to its relative value; if any large mass of property, like funds, the land, or the produce of land, be very considerably reduced in value, the effect, though less, would be similar: now if the value of the produce of land be reduced, not by any excess of quantity raised at home, for in that case the reduction in price would be made up by the quantity,

but by foreigners sending their produce here, the effect would be nearly the same. We have had plentiful harvests, which reduced the money price of corn, but annihilated no property, because the quantity compensated for the lower price; but the introduction of foreign corn lowered it still more, so that the whole of that which was in the kingdom diminished in value, and this produced the same effect as would have followed the annihilation of a quantity of property equal to the difference between what our own harvests alone would have reduced it to, and that to which it has been farther reduced by the introduction of foreign corn.

If the effect of the too late abundant harvests in 1812 and 1813, operated to reduce the money price of wheat to 10*s. per* bushel, and other corn in proportion, and if the introduction of foreign corn operated farther to reduce it to 8*s. per* bushel, the difference between these two prices would be the amount of the property annihilated. If the annihilation of one species of property, then, lowers the money price of all others, may not this in some degree account, not only for the

depression of lands, but of houses, of the funds, of canal shares, and almost every other species of property ?

It may be objected to this statement, that, by a depreciation in the money price of corn, be it to what extent it may, no property is annihilated, the consumer only obtains it for less than he could before, and though property may change hands, and that of the growers pass to the consumers, the community loses nothing by the exchange ; let this language be applied to any other description of property, the funds for instance: by reducing the dividends to one half their present rate no property will be annihilated, it will only change hands, and whilst the stock-holder is impoverished, those who pay taxes will pay but half, and be thus enriched to the same extent as the stock-holder is a sufferer.

It will not be contended in the last supposed case, that the value of all other property would not be reduced to a lower money price by such a decrease of dividend ; can it then happen that the dividend on land and its produce, should be reduced one half in money

price, and the other species of property not suffer similar reduction ?

Whatever weight may be given to this remark, one consideration merits the attention of the stock-holder ; the money price of his property must be regulated by the proportion betwixt buyers and sellers : if the depression of the landed and agricultural interests continue, instead of accumulating property, and vesting it in the government securities, they must withdraw from the public funds what they hold there, and thus increase the proportion of sellers to buyers, beyond what can be counterbalanced by any increase of capital, created by importing even a large quantity of corn at a cheaper rate than it can be grown here.

An apprehension has been sometimes expressed, that, by provisions being higher in this kingdom than in other countries, a considerable number of people would be induced to seek other places of residence, and thus emigrations, to a very injurious extent, would follow from such a situation of affairs.

If we examine the different classes of inhabitants that compose our population, it is

probable our apprehension of any extensive emigration taking place, or of any evil arising from what may take place, can be easily removed. Our most numerous class, the labourers in agriculture, have seldom the power of departing far from their usual places of residence; a removal from the south to the north of this island, or *vice versa*, is generally beyond the reach of their purses; to remove to a distant country is in most cases, especially to those with families, almost impossible; and the few manufacturing labourers who have left their own for other countries, have found themselves in such difficulties, that they have returned with eagerness, and given no encouragement to others to try the experiment.

To say nothing of the difference of language, and the very different modes of living adopted by the lower classes in foreign countries, our workmen have experienced difficulties, which arise from the high state of improvement to which we have attained. The great advantage this country enjoys in its manufactures over others is, that with us the division of labour is carried farther than

elsewhere; this, though an advantage to the community, is unfriendly to the removal of the individual to a country where the division of labour is less minute. The man who can perform but one, of two or three successive operations in a manufactory, acquires thereby a facility in that one which makes him valuable, where such a division exists; but if he remove to another spot, where the two or three operations have been usually performed by one hand, he becomes of less value, and the inferior workman, who can perform the whole, is preferred before him. Such a workman may not unaptly be compared to one movement in a piece of machinery, which, though valuable and important when connected with the other parts of the machine, is of little or no value by itself. In perfecting our manufactures, we have indeed reduced our men almost to machines; whether this be conducive to the health, either of body or mind, in the individual, is not now the question, but by reducing him to this state, we have almost taken from him the power of removing.

The price of labour in every part of the continent of Europe, especially in Germany, is so much lower than in England, that, unless our labourers could feed on rye instead of wheaten bread, their wages would not be equal to their subsistence; the fact is, that in no part of Europe do the labourers enjoy so many of the necessaries and the conveniences of life, as in this country, which would be sufficient to prevent emigration in that class, were they not prevented by want of the money to convey them, and by the difference of language.

The difficulties encountered by those master manufacturers, who have endeavoured to introduce our fabrics into other countries, have been no less great, and from the same cause; they have found no workmen accustomed to the mode or divisions of labour practised in this country, and, with very few exceptions, and those in the most simple manufactures, they have become disgusted, and abandoned the pursuit.

If no apprehensions need be entertained of the emigration of the labourers, either in agriculture or manufactures, we need be little

apprehensive that the state will suffer by the long absence of any other description of the community: a few annuitants, and some of our military and naval men, may, on account of the cheapness of living, prefer to pass their time on the continent; these must necessarily be a very small portion of the whole, even of those classes, for few Englishmen will abandon the comforts of their native country, for the sake of the additional luxuries which may be indulged in France or Italy.

It is to be lamented that, though Lord Lauderdale, Sir H. Parnel, Mr. Western, and some others, have addressed the public on the subject of the Corn Laws, and though the petitions presented to parliament last year were so numerous, no authors have appeared to oppose the views of those writers, except some anonymous ones in periodical publications; so that it is difficult to guess what objections can be made to such regulations as we have endeavoured to show to be necessary for the good of the community.

Mr. Rose, though he opposed in parliament the resolutions there offered, and has

since published his speech, cannot be considered as an enemy to such alteration in the laws, as may appear to be necessary for the protection of the agricultural interests of the country, though his speech certainly tended to delay, but it is hoped, not to defeat, the object of Mr. Huskisson's plan. He has indeed treated the report of the Committee of 1813 with considerable severity, but it must be confessed that Parliament has not been accustomed to legislate on such important subjects without fuller investigation, and more extensive enquiry, than that report exhibited. His own language, however, on the subject is all that can be desired, and there could be no doubt that the fuller reports of the two Committees of 1814, have determined the part he will act, even if he had not pledged himself by such plain expressions as we find in page 31 of his printed speech. "My own view of the subject is, that the grower of corn should be very effectually protected, to the extent of the price being high enough to ensure his being able to pay a fair rent, and to have a reasonable profit to himself; but when that object shall

be secured, the consumer should then have every possible facility of supply at a price not exceeding the protecting one."

A man like Mr. Rose, who, during a long and valuable life devoted to the public service, has taken unusual pains to attain accuracy on every subject connected with his duty, will feel obliged by having any slight deviations from that accuracy pointed out, especially when they are attributed only to the haste of publication, and to attendance on public business.

There is, in page 25, an expression which may tend to mislead; and, therefore, deserves some explanation. "It is perfectly well known that our supply from America is nearly confined to flour; and that in times of great scarcity we have had an abundant supply of flour." This supply in the year of greatest importation, 1807, was 493,910 hundred weight, equivalent to 150,000 quarters of wheat, or the consumption of the country for about three days: it may be farther remarked, that of this quantity, 317,810 hundred weight was afterwards exported, because it arrived too late for our necessities, and when the

price had fallen; thus we had from America in that year scarcely one day's supply, according to the average of our consumption.

In the remarks on the impropriety of including the prices of corn in Ireland, in any average to govern the importation, there seems to be an inaccuracy. Supposing the quantity of wheat grown in Ireland to be equal to that grown in Great Britain; the price of the former being 66*s.* and of the latter 78*s.* the average certainly would be 72*s.* as stated in his Appendix D.; but if the quantity grown in Ireland be one fifth of that grown in Great Britain, at the same prices, the average would be 76*s.* which considerably weakens, if it does not entirely obviate, Mr. Rose's objection.

In whatever way it may be directed by the legislature that an average shall hereafter be taken, it ought certainly to be formed on such principles, that the quantity sold at the various prices should be attended to in forming the average, which must otherwise be very inaccurate. If, in districts producing but a small proportion of grain, the price is suffered to operate equally with other districts

which produce a larger proportion, the average framed from the two prices, without adverting to their respective quantities, must mislead instead of informing.

Mr. Rose cannot be considered as opposing the principle, that our own agriculturists should have the monopoly of the home market for grain, when it is below a fair remunerating price; and as he is the only one of the opposers of Mr. Huskisson's proposition who has printed his opinions, we can only collect from the diurnal or other temporary prints, or from common conversation, the theory of those who contend for the importation of corn at all times, and without any reference to the price it may cost the English grower.

It appears that the calculation made by the advocates for the unlimited importation of corn, is nearly this; if foreign corn be permitted to come here at all times, the price in England will be reduced to that at which foreigners can raise it, and, by having always a market in this Island, they will so increase their productions that we need never dread a

scarcity when so many more extensive, and more fertile countries will be ready to supply our wants. This reduction in the price of grain, will operate to produce a similar reduction in the price of all the other necessaries of life: meat, beer, butter, cheese, fuel, house-rent, and cloathing, will next follow, the rent of land will gradually lessen, until at length every article of home production will be reduced to half the price it bore in the year 1812.

They proceed to prognosticate, that the labouring classes, without such intense application as is at present requisite, will be enabled to enjoy, in great abundance, all the necessaries of life; that the annuitant, drawing his fixed income from the funds or other securities, will be able to live in greater ease and affluence; and the whole of the community, having the amount of their expences thus reduced, will feel the pressure of the taxes less, and be enabled to increase their enjoyments; the increased prosperity of the foreign agriculturists, arising from supplying though on cheap terms the corn for our subsistence, will be such as to induce

them to consume a greater quantity of our manufactures, which, in addition to the lower price at which they can be made, will give an increase to our exports, and make them far exceed what they have hitherto done.

This, as nearly as can be collected, is the picture presented to the imagination by those who most strenuously contend for unlimited importation; and it merits some attention, not because it is the picture of the most thinking, but, perhaps, of the most numerous part of the community.

We have before attempted to show the improbability, not to say impossibility, of procuring a sufficiency for our subsistence, in case our own agriculture were reduced to three fourths of its present productiveness; and therefore one season slightly disastrous, with even a trifling diminution in our own culture, would be sufficient to destroy all these pleasing dreams; but supposing it possible, that, by the stimulus of having our ports always open to foreigners, their produce could be so increased as to enable them always to supply our wants; we may ask what reason have we to expect that they will

not take advantage of those wants, and demand prices which would be better paid to our own farmers? May we not expect that our distress would be made an instrument of revenue by the continental governments, and that, in addition to high prices, we may be made to pay taxes to support governments, sometimes indeed friendly, frequently neutral, but often inimical to us? If we hope to increase the consumption of our manufactures, what security have we, that, low as their prices may be reduced, the most friendly of the european monarchs will permit them to enter their dominions? Or if they do admit them, will they not lay duties on them, as well as on the corn they send us, and thus in both stages of the transaction render us tributary? It surely must be more advantageous to offer to our own cultivators, such inducements to continue their exertions, that they, and not foreigners, shall increase the consumption of the manufactures.

When by encouragement to foreign agriculture we have reduced the prices of food and have diminished the supplies furnished by our own soil, what effect will be produced

by a war with any of the great continental powers? Can we depend on their continuing to administer to our necessities, when in a state of hostility? Must we relinquish that tone of dignity which we have so long, and so ably supported, from the apprehension, that the countries on which we have rendered ourselves dependant for bread should inflict the punishment of famine, if we claim our rights? Is it not, then, in this view important that our sole dependance should be on ourselves? In short, to use the language of Mr. Malthus, "are we ready to encounter the yet untried risk of making a considerable portion of our population dependent upon foreign supplies of grain, and of exposing them to those vicissitudes and changes in the channels of commerce to which manufacturing states are of necessity subject?"

Let us, however, suppose this great desideratum accomplished; that by gradual, but not by slow steps, the prices of all commodities shall be reduced, the rent of land lowered one half, provisions of all kinds experience an equal depreciation, all our manufactures from domestic raw materials be brought to

the same standard, and those composed of foreign articles be reduced to the price which half the cost of the present rates of wages would afford.

If all this could be accomplished, what benefit to any considerable portion of the community would it produce?

It will scarcely be contended, that the classes who subsist by their daily industry would obtain in this state a larger quantum of subsistence than they now enjoy; the probability, as we have before shown, is that, by the lessened demand for agricultural labour, they would be paid worse in proportion to the price of provisions than they are at present.

It has, however, been said, that this low price for all commodities will increase our exportable produce to an extent sufficient to compensate for all the other evils that it will introduce; that the demand for labour will be so great, as to ensure constant employment, and consequently liberal wages; that our manufacturers, having extensively increased their exports, the balance of exports will create favourable exchanges with all other countries, and thus that we shall obtain their

produce at low rates, whilst we can sell our own at high prices.

Whoever considers the small extent of country, and the few consumers to which we can have access, how deficient in general those countries are in articles suitable to make adequate returns, how many rivals we shall have to contend with, and, especially, how very small is the proportion which labour bears to the whole value of our manufactured goods, will hesitate before he rates the advantages we can receive from them so high as to put them in any sort of competition with the evils which we shall presently proceed to point out.

It may for a moment be conceded, that such a state of things as we are supposing would be highly advantageous to two descriptions of persons certainly constituting a very numerous body, such as derive their income solely or principally from the public funds, and the officers of government, civil and military, through all their gradations, from the minister of state to the lowest exciseman, from the commander in chief to the ensign or cornet; these, from the same annuity

they now receive, would doubtless be enabled to procure a greater portion of the means of enjoyment than they have at present; but the payment of their annuities must depend on the capacity of government to continue them at their present rate, on the ability and disposition of ministers to maintain the present revenue, when every article from which it is derived shall be reduced one half in its money price, a subject we shall hereafter have occasion to discuss.

If we select from these two classes all those who derive larger incomes from other sources than from the public funds or government salaries, and consider that the depreciation on one kind of property will exceed the advance on the other, we may not be disposed to rate the real advantage in this respect very high, or that a great proportion even of these classes will be benefited.

If, on the other hand, we look to the consequences which will arise from any excessive depreciation in the money price of land, of houses, of mines, of canals and roads, of wool, of iron, of machinery, of ships, and every other species of property, that compose

our national wealth, or rather, if we consider the effect of raising the relative value of money to much more than its present power, which is the same as lowering the money price of commodities, we shall hesitate before we even wish it to be accomplished.

As raising the value of money is the object which those desire to attain, who talk of reducing the prices of commodities till they can purchase double the quantity that they can at present with the same sum of money, and supposing this object to be attainable, we must consider how long a period will be required before this desirable object can be realised. The greatest mass of the revenue of individuals is derived from the rent of land and of houses, and is secured to the proprietors at its present money price by leases of various durations, but which, we will presume, have on the average seven years longer to run. This largest description of money revenue being thus secured for that period, it must influence every other, and we cannot, therefore, calculate that the desirable period when money shall have attained its maximum, or commodities their minimum, which is the

same thing, will arrive in less than seven years: during the course of that period then, every article of life will in popular language be continually sinking in value; what is purchased cheap to-day will be dear to-morrow; the stock of goods in the hands of the merchant, the manufacturer, and the shopkeeper will daily decline in price, and at the end of each of these seven years he will find himself in idea poorer than at the commencement of it.

It will be in vain to tell him, that every other commodity being reduced equally with that in which he deals, he is as rich as if each had maintained its former price, that his wealth consists not in its value as compared with money, but as compared with other commodities, and that instead of being poorer, as he supposes, he is in reality a cher man than before. This philosophical, and, perhaps, just reasoning will have no effect on him; he has no criterion by which to judge, but his books, and the valuation of his stock; and he will, therefore, trust more to them than to the most profound reasoner in political economy. This feeling of gra-

dual loss will extend to all the productive members of the community, both agricultural and commercial, in spite of all the specious or solid reasoning that can be opposed to it, and its effect on the industry of the nation will be highly detrimental. Who will feel any energy in exertions which he foresees must produce loss? Who will devote any portion of his capital to building, to improving, to buying, to tilling, and to manufacturing, when he sees clearly that, in a short time, the object on which his capital has been expended, will bear a less money price than it had previously cost him? Who will employ a labourer, or an artisan beyond what the most urgent necessity shall demand, when he knows that the production of such men's labour will fall in money price, even before it is completed? What will be the condition of the day labourer during this septennial purgatory, through which we must pass to reach paradise? What means have been planned by those philanthropists who demand cheap provisions for the sake of the poor, to induce the rich to employ them, whilst they will lose by their labour? Must

not the poor be greater sufferers whilst this progress of depreciation is going on, than they would be by an equal rise, which, making their employers suppose they are becoming richer, would induce them to furnish more abundant employment? Let it be supposed, however, that this process is more rapid; that instead of seven years of gradual increase in the relative value of money, the great influx of foreign provisions shall produce a sudden effect, that money prices for all commodities shall become instantly less, will the evil, though shorter in duration, be less injurious? Or will a shock so violent, be borne with more tranquillity, than the slower progress of gradual decay?

Passing, however, the steps which must lead to the happy era, when every necessary of life shall be reduced one half in price, and without noticing any of the calamities which may attend its progress, let us suppose we have attained this object, which has been represented to the imagination of the people of England as the reward of their labours and their privations. In what situation, then shall we be placed with a national debt of

nine hundred millions, the interest of which must be paid, and with a peace expenditure of forty-five millions?

If the land and houses be reduced to half their present rent, what defalcation will that alone create in the public revenue? What will be the diminution in the receipt of the customs on *ad valorem* articles, when such articles are at half their present value? What will be deducted from the legacy tax, when the property bequeathed is of less nominal value? What from the other stamp duties, when the articles conveyed are lessened in money price? Will not this act as a premium to illicit traders when the materials of which spirits, malt, beer, soap, candles, and other excisable articles are composed, are reduced to one half their present cost? Is not the disproportion between the tax, and the cost of the articles taxed, already so great as to create numberless frauds, and how much must they increase when the article is lessened in value, and the duty continued as before?

Will not reducing the money price of all commodities to the extent supposed, have

precisely the same effect, as doubling the amount of the national debt? And will it not place us under the necessity, either of doubling every existing impóst, or looking out for such fresh objects of taxation as shall raise our revenue to double its present amount? It has been calculated (no matter with what accuracy) that one fifth of every man's income is, in this country, extracted for the support of government: is it possible that two fifths shall be drawn from him, without utter ruin both to individuals and to government?

We may be told that, when every article of living shall be reduced one half, then the salaries of the officers of government may be also lessened; be it so, then one class of those before supposed to be benefited by the reduction will cease to draw advantage from it, and the good of this supposed blessing will be lessened, and consequently the argument for it, if it can be called an argument, will be so far weakened.

None have yet gone so far as to propose the reduction of the interest of the national debt to one half, though they have been very liberal in their plans for lessening the rent of

lands, and the income of its cultivators, yet to this point we must ultimately come, if money increases to considerably more than its present relative value, and then the only remaining class of those supposed to be benefited, will be placed in the same situation as their fellow sufferers.

If, by the reduction of all the produce of the country, the government be placed in a situation of embarrassment, the condition of very numerous classes of the community will meet no less difficulty, the situation of creditor and debtor will be peculiarly alarming: must debts contracted before the fall of productions be paid in the same currency as those contracted afterwards? Let us suppose an estate mortgaged before land is reduced in money price: if it be mortgaged for one half the value, must the mortgagee take the whole estate? If it be mortgaged for two thirds, must the mortgagee take the whole estate, and then throw the mortgagor into prison, merely because the value of money is raised? Let us suppose provision made for the younger branches of a family, by settlements on property bequeathed to the elder, if

the settlements now amount to one half the value, in the case under consideration, the reduction in the price of produce would give the whole to the younger branches, and reduce the elder to beggary. What will be the situation of the capitalist, who has lent his money on life annuities, if the rent be reduced below the annuity? must his term be continued till he is reimbursed out of the estate of the next heir? Or must he be allowed to ruin the grantor? There would be no end to the embarrassments introduced into the whole economy of society by the supposed reduction of property, and can any reason be given for creating such a chaos of confusion?

Thus much may suffice to shew that no benefit would arise from a general reduction in the price of commodities; but it is happy for the community that such reduction is scarcely within the compass of possibility: each step of the progress would diminish production, and as productions are lessened, prices would again rise; thus a check would originate in the system itself, which would destroy the picture that imagination has coloured with such brilliant tints.

It has been too frequent a practice to represent the agricultural and commercial bodies of the nation as composed of men with opposite and contending interests, and not as they, in reality, are, bodies whose interests, with few and slight exceptions, are the same, deriving their prosperity or their adversity from the same causes, and one never injuring the other without equally injuring itself.

This practice has arisen from having confounded the whole commercial interest of the country with that which is the most insignificant part of it, the trade of supplying foreign consumption, which it must be allowed may sometimes be in direct opposition to the other interests of the community.

To estimate the importance of the classes or bodies of men whose interest is sometimes in opposition, we must enumerate the landholders, the cultivators, and their labourers, the whole of our traders in articles of home consumption, those manufacturers scattered over the whole surface of the island, whose articles are consumed at home, the merchants importers of foreign goods for our home sup-

ply, the dispensers of those goods to the consumers, the artificers employed in buildings, on canals, roads, rivers, and mills,—the owners of ships employed in the coasting, the coal trade, and the fisheries, with the owners of boats on rivers and canals,—the proprietors of the West India colonies, and the owners of the ships they employ: these, with all the other minuter bodies, must be considered on one side, as all having a common interest, as being involved in the prosperity of each other; and to these may be opposed, whenever there is any opposition, the interests of that small body employed in manufacturing for foreign consumption, and in transmitting their productions to foreign countries. It would appear invidious to enter into a comparison of the weight or the utility of these two opposing interests, and it is the less necessary, because, among the whole body of the British manufacturers, the number who work solely for foreign consumption is indeed small; the far greater part work principally to supply the internal demand, and in every case where their internal extends beyond their external trade, they are bound up with the other interests of the com-

munity, and, equally with them, fade or flourish as agriculture is depressed or encouraged.

As there is not in reality, there ought not in feeling, to be any opposition of interests between the members of the British community. In the vulgar phrase, "we live on each other," and though by some persons, from want of consideration, the interests of one part of the community have been represented as more important than they really are, and those of others have not been duly appreciated, yet reflection will correct such ideas, and every part of the publick, it is to be hoped, will concur in the common interests of all.

The manufacturers of this country have contributed towards forming a national character; they have created or called forth talents, which might otherwise have never been developed; they have given an impulse of industry to the whole people, and, by combining the taste of foreign countries with the philosophy of our own, have produced articles of beauty and utility superior to the best models of other countries. In calicoes and other goods made of cotton, our manufacturers have borrowed, but not servilely

copied, designs from Egypt, from Greece, and from Italy; and, by the help of chemistry, have given a brilliancy of colouring, unequalled even by the pencils of the Hindoos, and rendered those tints as durable as the substances on which they are impressed.

The knowledge of mechanics exhibited by Arkwright, by Watt, by Bolton, and by Reynolds, has abridged human labour, and extended human capacity, whilst the scientific labours of Wedgewood have converted even the most unproductive of our soils, into articles unrivalled in beauty, and highly conducive to the health, the cleanliness, and the comfort of mankind.

It is impossible for such energies to be exerted without producing extensive effects: it is impossible for the spirit of enterprize, of industry, of reflection, and of perseverance, to be excited without communicating a portion of similar spirit wherever it extends; and it is doing only justice to our British manufacturers to acknowledge the obligations which the country owes them. The enterprise directed by intellect, which they have fostered, has excited emulation amongst

other classes; and even the agriculturists, naturally slow in improvements, have been inspirited by the example of their fellow citizens, and, having adopted a portion of their feelings, have made progressive steps towards better cultivation, have, in some measure, made science the hand-maid of agriculture, and produced effects far beyond the calculations of their predecessors.

We do not intend to lessen the characters of our gallant soldiers and sailors, who have stamped on their country the name of the deliverer of Europe, when we hint that probably a part of that spirit, to which the civilized world is so greatly indebted, may have been imbibed from the activity, combined with patience, which our manufacturers have so eminently displayed, and communicated through all ranks of society. Activity and perseverance have, indeed, always formed the prominent features of our national character; in the former we have rivalled the French, and in the latter equalled the Germans; but it is by the rare union of both these qualities, that we have surpassed each of those nations. Without derogating from

our former achievements, we may surely assert, that of late we have as far excelled our predecessors, as they did their contemporaries; and is it paying too high a compliment to our scientific manufacturers, if we attribute something to their exertions stimulating the energy and activity of their countrymen?

Whilst we would cheerfully pay that tribute of applause to which our manufacturers are entitled, we shall naturally enquire how they were encouraged and supported in their pursuits? To what stimulus are they indebted for the hopes which inspired their first projects? On whose fostering protection did their early efforts depend? From what source did they expect, and from what did they receive, the encouragement which matured their plans, and ultimately remunerated them for their labour, their skill, and their capital? Was not domestic consumption the object to which they looked? Is it not by this they have been repaid? And is it not to this they still principally look up for a continuance of their prosperity? If, besides our domestic, including our colonial consumption, they have had foreign consumers, could

they have afforded to supply them with the long credit they require, unless the profits on their home trade had first procured by its quicker returns, the requisite capital?

The more we reflect on this subject, the more fully we shall be convinced of the intimate union between the interests of agriculture and commerce; if one creates a stimulus, the other rewards exertion; if one furnishes luxuries, the other repays with necessaries; if one feels depression and dejection, the other languishes and faints; if one becomes prosperous and elevated, should not the other partake of its affluence and of its enjoyments?

With this feeling strong on our minds, we shall not enquire if that portion of industry and capital which creates an export beyond the wants of other countries, does not, by overloading foreign markets, employ that capital and industry in a direction less beneficial to the community, than if it were applied to the improvement of our own soil. We shall not insinuate, what has been asserted, that manufacturing for foreign consumption robs our agriculture of its due portion of capital,

nor allow, that so small a proportion of the great mass of British property, can, even if ill directed, produce effects deserving of notice.

The great interests of the community, the landed, the agricultural, and the home commercial, need feel no jealousy, need fear no rivalry; they are so connected that they must stand or fall together; and it would be descending from their high ground, if they felt any irritation when the interest of the comparatively small class (the labourers for foreign consumption) is put in competition with theirs.

A little reflection will destroy much prejudice, and there is certainly occasion for the exercise of it, on a subject which excited such unjust clamours as the attempt made in the last session of parliament, to provide for the sustenance of the inhabitants of Great Britain.

Mr. Rose has thought proper to censure the report of the committee of which Sir Henry Parnell was chairman, for omitting to suggest some permanent provisions to ascertain when distillation shall be discontinued; and Lord Lauderdale recommends that, be-

tween the time when the advance in corn shall have made it necessary to stop exportation, and that in which it shall be allowed to import free of duty, the distilleries should be stopped.

It may appear presumptuous to differ from such authorities, but the quantity of corn used in the distilleries is a very small proportion of the growth of the kingdom, and extracting the spirits by no means renders it totally unfit for other and valuable uses; but as we may oppose to the opinions of these gentlemen that of one, never mentioned but with regret and respect, a quotation from Mr. Burke will be more to the purpose than any thing we can offer. Speaking of the rise both of corn and meat in the year 1795, he says,

"Another cause, and that not of inconsiderable operation, tended to produce a scarcity in flesh provisions.

"It is one that, on many accounts, cannot be too much regretted, and the rather as it was the sole *cause* of a scarcity in that article, which arose from the proceedings of men

themselves, I mean the stop put to the distillery.

" The hogs (and that would be sufficient) which were fed with the waste produce, did not demand the fourth part of the corn used by farmers in fattening them. The spirit was nearly so much clear gain to the nation. It is an odd way to make flesh cheap, to stop or check the distillery.

" The distillery itself produces an immense article of trade almost all over the world, to Africa, to North America, and to various parts of Europe.

" It is of great use, next, to food itself, in our fisheries, and to our whole navigation. A great part of the distillery was carried on with damaged corn unfit for bread, and by barley and malt of the lowest quality. These things could not be more unexceptionably employed. The domestic consumption of spirits, produced without complaints a very great revenue, applicable, if we pleased, in bounties to the bringing corn from other places, far beyond the value of that consumed in making it, or to the encouragement of its increased production at home.

" As to what is said in a physical and moral view against the home consumption of spirits, experience has long since taught me very little to respect the declamations on that subject: whether the thunder of the laws or the thunder of eloquence is hurled on gin, always I am thunder-proof. The alembic in my mind, has furnished the world a far greater benefit and blessing, than if the *opus maximum* had been really found by chemistry, and like Midas, we could turn every thing into gold.

" Undoubtedly there may be a dangerous abuse in the excess of spirits; and at one time I am ready to believe the excess was great. When spirits are cheap, the business of drunkenness is achieved with little time or labour, but that evil I consider to be wholly done away.

" Observation for the last forty years, and very particularly for the last thirty, has furnished me with ten instances of drunkenness from other causes to one from this. Ardent spirit is a great medicine often to remove distempers, much more frequently to prevent them, or to chase them away in their begin-

nings. It is not nutritive in *any great* degree. But if not food, it greatly alleviates the want of it. It invigorates the stomach for the digestion of poor meagre diet, not easily aliable to the human constitution. Wine the poor cannot touch. Beer as applied to many occasions (as among seamen and fishermen for instance) will by no means do the business. Let me add, what wits inspired with champaign and claret will turn into ridicule, it is a medicine for the mind. Under the pressure of the cares and sorrows of our mortal condition, men have at all times, and in all countries, called in some physical aid to their moral considerations, wine, beer, opium, brandy, or tobacco.

"I consider, therefore, the stopping of the distillery, economically, financially, commercially, medicinally, and in some degree morally too, as a measure rather well meant than well considered. It is too precious a sacrifice to prejudice."

It may, perhaps, appear extraordinary, that in the preceding sheets no notice has been taken of a subject which so deeply occupied the attention of the public four years

ago, and which, though the interest it excited has in a considerable degree ceased, has been considered by Lord Lauderdale, Mr. Malthus, and others, as intimately connected with the price which is necessary to protect the grower of corn.

The report of the committee appointed to enquire into the cause of the high price of gold bullion in the year 1810, is drawn up with considerable acuteness, as is natural when the investigation was conducted by some of the most intelligent and industrious members of the House of Commons: it would not be doing justice to the Committee, or their report to insinuate that it was a mere measure of party; but it will now scarcely be deemed uncandid to say, that, if party feelings did not direct in that discussion, there prevailed in it a spirit scarcely more friendly to calm investigation—A spirit of proselytism influenced more or less all the followers of the sect, and, like all new sectaries, those who did not imbibe their principles, were assailed with ridicule, or attempted to be silenced by contempt.

0461

As the practical men, the plain, plodding merchants and directors of the bank could not be converted to the new doctrines, it was represented that they were utterly unfit to judge on such sublime subjects; that such blind guides must lead the country to ruin, and that there could be no salvation but within the pale of that sect which believed that bank-notes were a most mischievous substitute for gold; that the excessive quantity of paper, and not the balance of payments, being against us, or the demand which war created for gold, was the cause of unfavourable exchanges; and that our future happiness depended solely on diminishing the issue of the bank by compelling them to pay in specie in the year 1812.

Another article of the creed of this sect, the natural consequence of the other doctrines, and, indeed, implied in them, was that the further increase of bank-notes was one of those dreadful evils, which it was impossible to think of without horror, and which must be attended with the most immediate and fatal effects.

In spite, however, of these doctrines, in spite of the prophetic denunciations which enforced them, the legislature was not terrified; they left the plain plodding directors of the bank to follow their accustomed course, without recommending any submission to the theorists; and now, strange as it may appear in the end of the year 1814, two years after the period pointed out for the reduction of the paper medium, and the converting of it into specie, the issue of bank-paper has been nearly doubled, the exchanges with all countries have become rapidly less unfavourable, the relative value of gold, and especially of silver, to paper is nearly equal, and the bank directors only wait the sanction of government to pay in gold or paper at the option of the holders of their notes.

As the fears which were so vehement four years ago are now somewhat allayed, and as the predictions of the sect are not likely to be accomplished, a little pleasantry may be indulged without apprehension of offending.

" Liberius si
Dixero quid, si forte jocosius, hoc mihi juris
Cum venia dabis."

The progressive approximation of bullion to Bank-notes, may, however, perhaps be somewhat retarded by large importations of corn, which will prevent the great quantities of foreign commodities which were in store here, and are now sent to the continent, from producing their full effect on the balance of payments, which regulates the course of exchange; the numerous travellers on the continent drawing remittances from England, and a large army in Flanders in British pay, may also tend to delay the equalization of specie and bank notes: but as the peace has rendered gold less valuable on the continent, and as some was hoarded here which will probably come again into circulation, it has not appeared necessary in these sheets to consider the state of the currency; which if of less value than the gold coin, is so slightly inferior as to be immaterial in the view which we have taken of the interests of the country.

The subject to which the preceding sheets relate is in the best hands: the two branches of the legislature have taken considerable pains to understand it in all its bearings, and the publication of the Reports of their Com-

mittees have done much, and will effect more, as they become more diffused, in supplying that portion of knowledge which is alone required to set the great body of the people right.

THE END.

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