

0327

109-14

重複 109-29



CONSIDERATIONS

ADDRESSED TO

The Nobility and Gentlemen of the landed interest, to engage them to use their influence to have the prohibition of the distillery of malt spirits taken off in Scotland.

GENTLEMEN,  
EVERY man that is in any manner acquainted with the circumstances of this country, must observe and acknowledge, that barley, raking the kingdom all over, is the staple grain by which the farmers are enabled to improve their grounds, and to pay their rents; that it is a grain mostly proper for drink, very disagreeable and unnourishing for food, and made use of only by the poor themselves in pinching times of scarcity; that it is a grain easy and refreshing to the ground, and in which the art and industry of the husbandman in cleaning and cultivating his fields, even for the advantage of other crops, is mostly exercised. I shall not insist on these, and many other particulars relative thereto; as the public have had occasion already to see them treated of in a pamphlet, intituled, *An Apology for Whisky*; to which I must beg leave to refer you: and I shall lay before you some other additional

B tional

[ 4 ]

tional considerations as little interfering with the arguments contained in that pamphlet as possible.

You should consider, Gentlemen, that the farmers have no representative in our constitution: you are their patrons; and it is only through your influence and application, that they can have their grievances legally redressed, and that unavoidable poverty prevented, to which the late prohibition, if continued, will expose them by lowering the prices of their grain. Every motive of generosity should excite you to lend your aid to those who have no other aid to depend upon but yours. But you have still stronger motives than humanity and generosity to excite you, the laws of self-preservation; the value of your own fortunes in a good measure depends upon it, the honourable support of your families, and your independence and influence in the kingdom.

It is certain that the prohibition of distillation will diminish the price of barley, as it stops one of the principal fountains of its consumpt; and that was the very reason for which the parliament made the prohibition in our late times of scarcity. If the grain by which your farms and rents are paid is lessened, your livings must be lessened of course. You cannot be so vain, like the Egyptian taskmasters, to imagine, that you can have brick without straw; that you can keep up the value of your rents, when the means of raising them are destroyed. The calamity perhaps may not be sensibly felt for two or three years at first; but it must inevitably come at last, and the consequence is considerably felt already.

If

[ 5 ]

If the farmers profits were very considerable, the whole loss, by the prohibition, would fall upon them; and indeed that will be the case in some farms in the fertile straths of Scotland: but taking the kingdom all over; farms are set so high, that all that farmers can expect, is a moderate subsistence without the expectation of any profit at all; the farmers must therefore be generally ruined with it immediately; and the prejudice of the proprietors cannot long be deferred.

In the common affairs of commerce, if a man is obliged to sell his commodities cheaper than ordinary, he likewise has the opportunity to purchase them cheaper at the next market. But that is an advantage the farmers are deprived of: their commodities are cheapened; but the rent of their farms, and the expence of all the requisites of cultivation, are continued, and many of them increased.

Gentlemen in their estates, and tenants in their farms, have a natural right to the produce of their soils, and cannot be deprived of it without manifest injustice. It was upon the faith of that their estates were purchased, and their leases entered into; it was likewise upon the faith of that, that distillers were at the expence of learning their business, and at the expence of purchasing the houses and implements of distillation. Should the perpetual prohibition take place, it would be an act of injustice, contrary to the spirit of the nation, and the equity of the British parliament, who were never in use to deprive men of their property and privileges, without a reasonable equivalent. When the jurisdictions of the Scotch nobility and gentry were taken away, they received the full

B 2

value

[ 6 ]

value of them: but in this case gentlemen, farmers, and distillers, are deprived of their fortunes, of their employments, and of their bread, without any recompense, though guilty of no fault, nor guilty of any error which human wisdom could foresee, or prudence prevent. I hope this is the only instance wherein the justice and compassion of the British nation does not extend to the suffering and the innocent, who must be sent to the begging with no eye to pity and no hand to help; not for their mismanagement; not by the decay of trade, the calamities of war, or the judgments of Heaven; but from the mistaken interests of morality and commerce.

I am persuaded it is the first time that people were debarred their businesses and deprived of their bread, merely because their commodities were cheap.

It is a great hardship upon small country taverners and retailers of liquors who pay a tax for licences, and are not allowed liquors to retail: They must either transgress the laws, and forego the interest of their country, by vending smuggled French brandy; or they must transgress the laws of health, by vending the stuff made of melasses; and had they conscience to sell them, and the confidence to run the risk of being fined for them, it is even rare that they could purchase them, and as rare that people would drink them. Many small alehouses in Scotland were unable to pay the licences when spirits were allowed, and many more, since they are prohibited, must be given up: by that means many more poor families are straitened, and many beggared; and the consumpt of ale is prevented as well as whisky.

It

[ 7 ]

It is vain to pretend that people will drink ale as formerly. If trade and industry have brought affluence, affluence brings delicacy both in food and dress. The transition from beer to punch is as necessary, as from serge to silk. People will never fall backward when their circumstances are going forward. If people are not allowed to drink the fruit of our own manufacture for the benefit of Britain, they will drink brandy and wine for the benefit of France.

It is pretended, that the prices of grain and other provisions are grown so high, that our manufacturers are not able to afford our manufactures so cheap as foreign nations, who will therefore outstrip us at foreign markets, and ruin our trade; and consequently the stopping of distillation is a law that is prudent and reasonable.

It is the taxes that greatly augment the price of provisions. The national debt of near 100 millions takes a great many taxes to pay the immense interest. If the national debt were scored off, all the burthensome taxes would be discharged, and our manufacturers would live cheaper. Let our mercantile people apply homeward, and see how they would relish poverty when it comes to their own door. It would be no greater hardship upon them, if the money they have lent were never repaid, than it is for us to have our subsistence taken from us.

If provisions must be cheapened, that our manufacturers, as it is pretended, may be enabled to outstrip their neighbours for the cheapness of their commodities at a foreign market, who is to gain by it? Not the manufacturers, for their wages must be diminished, or the argument is good for nothing.

[ 8 ]

thing. If their provisions are made cheaper, and their wages undiminished, it will only make them idler, and their manufactures scarcer, and consequently dearer. The landed interest, the gentlemen, farmers, and tradesmen, whose dependence is on them, cannot gain by it: they must, on the contrary, be ruined by it. The government cannot be advantaged by it; for when the livings and incomings of the generality of the people are diminished, the taxes must be diminished of course. Nobody must be advantaged except our overgrown merchants. He that has a mite must live on half a mite, and he that has a million must have a million more.

It will easily appear, that the government cannot be benefited by the prohibition; for the taxes are levied from the fruits of the earth, from the produce of the island, and from those imported commodities that are consumed on the island. For the encouragement of trade, those commodities that are exported are not taxed; but, on the contrary, many of them are allowed premiums to encourage their exportation. If therefore the livings of landed gentlemen, farmers, and manufacturers, are diminished, the livings of stablers, taverners, and merchants, must likewise in part be diminished. The taxes paid to the government will decrease in proportion; and these being insufficient to answer the demands and expences of the government, new taxes must be imposed to make good their deficiency; these new taxes will increase the national poverty, and the country will gradually go to ruin. I ask again, For whom shall the nation suffer all this distress and poverty? I answer, For those swollen and overgrown merchants, whose

[ 9 ]

whose riches, whose millions, have almost set them above our constitution already.

A people declining from affluence, are always needy and destitute. People are extremely loath to sink to a lower rank than they have been accustomed to maintain. In that condition, gentlemen, &c. will be less able to pay their taxes; and these taxes will be exceedingly more grievous to them, than if they had never known the benefit of plenty. The body-politic resembles the natural body; when it shrinks from its former lustiness and corpulence, it never retains its comeliness, health, and vigour. It had been much less grievous for them never to have risen from the dirt, than to be thrown back into the dirt with all their fineries upon them; and if they must return to work, they will return to it very awkwardly, when, according to the proverb, their work-arm is broken.

But how does it appear that our manufactures are upon the decline, and incapable to cope with our neighbours and rivals? One would think, that this should first be discoverable by the decline of our commerce, and the poverty of our merchants. Is not our trade constantly advancing, and our merchants the richest in the world? Does not every body know, that it is the merchants in London, and the other mercantile corporations, that for the most part supply those immense sums employed in supporting the expences of the war? Have not their riches already given them such influence, that they almost pretend to dictate to the government, and the legislature; and have sometimes almost ventured to affront the Majesty of the kingdom?

Did

[ 10 ]

Did we not lately see a number of foreign troops, his Majesty's own troops, brought over, at the request of the British parliament, to save our country, especially the city of London, from the danger of an imminent invasion, lying, during the rigour of the winter's frost and snow, in the open fields, and on the barren heaths of England; because the mayor of Maidstone, and some of our mercantile stockjobbers, were out of humour, and in a fit of bouncing? Power always accompanies riches. The town of Amsterdam has almost entirely got the better of the constitution of the United Provinces, and the town of London is fast following the example.

Consider, Gentlemen, the circumstances how the continuation of the prohibition was brought about, after the markets were fallen to a reasonable value. An inquest-jury was appointed to inspect the situation of the county of Middlesex; the jury found them all very peaceable, while there was no reason why they should be discomposed; and these good dispositions, they inferred, were owing to the expectation of the continuance of the prohibition of distillation. We are told, that when the Spanish clergy could not persuade their King Philip to expel the Moors, a bell at Velilah was said to fall a-ringing of its own accord; it pronounced no language but the ordinary sound of bells; yet the clergy persuaded the King, that the miracle was intended against the infidels and heretics, and so satisfied his scruples, that the inhumane expulsion immediately took place. If a second inquiry should be made, and the people of Middlesex still be found quiet, I think it might more reasonably be inferred to be owing to the expectation, that the

[ 11 ]

the distilleries are going to be restored; that our own subjects are going to be again employed in raising our own manufacture; that the cause of smuggling is going to be prevented; that the money is to be kept in our own kingdom, and not sent over seas to our perfidious friends, and our inveterate enemies; that our government is to receive a tax of a considerable extent, and nowise burdensome to the subjects, to enable them to carry on an honourable war for the interest of commerce; and that agriculture, the soul of life and trade, is to be relieved of its discouragement.

When the continuation of the prohibition of the distillation and exportation of grain was insisted upon by the mercantile interest and boroughs, after the markets were fallen to a reasonable value, the arguments pretended were the relief of the poor and industrious tradesman. But it was not long till the true motive discovered itself: No sooner was there the prospect for a foreign market for grain, than those gentlemen insisted, that the ports should be opened; and their demands, as they are always, were obtained; exportation was allowed, and premiums granted; distillation was still prohibited, and a considerable tax refused, notwithstanding the urgent necessities of the public. Who is so blind as not to see through the flimsy disguise? The gain of our mercantile corporations is all in all. The exportation of grain brings gain, and so does the importation of spirits. In time we must neither eat nor drink, unless we pay a tax to our new masters, as well as to the government.

It was next pretended, that the prohibition was intended for virtue, and to preserve the morals of

C

the

[ 12 ]

the people. Let us believe them, if we see them regard it in more affecting instances. Vanity and an extravagance in dress and equipage are the reigning distempers of the times, and the luxuriant source of many vices. "A land of levity," says Dr Young, "is a land of guilt; as we are at war with the power, it were well if we were at war with the manners of France." Look along our streets, you shall not see a drunken people reeling and stumbling from one side of the street to the other, and knocking their head against sign-posts: you will see a more agreeable sight, our gentlemen, ay and shopkeepers too, shivering about with their hands wrapt in rich Siberian furs, and the females sailing along in all the colours of the rainbow, dressed in silks, for which we send our ready bullion to the Indies.

Nothing is so much the parent of idleness, (as idleness is of every vice), as the prostitute use of tea, nor more promotes those nervous and vapourish distempers, that are the natural causes of fear and cowardice, and which tend to make the nation effeminate and defenceless. If you go into a whisky-shop in a morning, and find a porter or a footyman taking his dram, go to his house, and you shall see his wife willing to serve you in any thing you have occasion for, if once she had done with her tea. The dram circulates the husband's blood, and cheers him to support his labour; the tea sinks the spirits, and shakes the wife's nerves, and unfits her for any labour.

As the consumpt of these foreign and far-fetched commodities are the inlets of cowardice, vice, and vanity, do we hear any proposal for discharging them? Quite the contrary. Our fleets and forces must

[ 13 ]

must be sent to support the East-India company, who have monopolized the gainful traffic, gainful I mean to them, though prejudicial to the public; and new taxes must be imposed on the nation, to bear the expences of these forces and equipments. Is the good of the nation, and the morality of the people considered in these particulars? No! What then is considered? The profit and elevation of our merchants, already too rich and elevated.

But what kind of preachers of righteousness do our supporters of national morality employ? Nothing shews more that the influence of the nation is at present running in a wrong and sordid channel, than those abandoned and scurrilous pamphlets and letters addressed to the people of England, void of all modesty and literature, and stuffed with bombast, scurrility, and treason. But abandoned and contemptible as they are, they have their abundant share of success. It is no uncommon thing to see a wretched witling this day influencing the councils of Britain, and the fate of Europe, and a month after standing on the pillory, condemned for falsehood, scurrility, and treasonable invectives. I should be at a loss for language to describe these contemptible vermine, if I had not found their character and fate elegantly described by the Apostle Jude. "These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts, and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having mens persons in admiration because of advantage. These filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities. These are clouds without water carried about of winds, raging waves of the sea, foming out

C 2

" their

[ 14 ]

“ their own shame, wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.”

It is a great discouragement to learning, as well as a sign of the change and weakness of our constitution, when such low scribblers, without virtue, without elegance and literature, only with sounding words, and impudent falsehoods, can influence the councils of Britain, and the deliberations of her legislature. No accomplishment is requisite, but a swollen bombast eloquence, which one would take for oratory burlesqued.

It is now high time for our nobility, and gentlemen of the landed interest, to look about them, and to exert themselves for their independence and influence in the commonwealth. If riches have thrown the balance of power so much into the mercantile scale already, what can be expected, Gentlemen, when your estates are diminished by the low price of barley, by which mostly your rents are paid? Power, honour, and places attend riches, and fly from poverty. If you allow the incroachment to go on, and turn inveterate, things may soon come to such a pass, that the foot will say unto the head, I have no need of thee!

By the burden of your estates, and many of you by the risk of your lives, you have supported, and are still supporting a war for the interests of commerce; Let it be subservient to the interest of the community, and not the means to impoverish and enslave it. Trade is only valuable, as it makes the trading country rich and respectful; if the country must be impoverished and depressed for the sake of trade, that is sacrificing the substance to the shadow.

Cast

[ 15 ]

Cast your eyes over seas, and observe the condition of our neighbouring and sister commonwealth. The riches of commerce have given the mercantile part of the community almost the whole power and influence in their constitution, and you will see how they exercise their power. That they may riot in the gain of an illicit traffic, you will see them betraying their allies and friends, by whom the very being of their commonwealth has been preserved; you will see them underhand assisting their natural and necessary enemies; you will see them labouring to lead the United Provinces into a war against their allies and benefactors; a war which in the execution must endanger the landed interest, and, whether victorious or unsuccessful, must go a great way to ruin their commonwealth. You will not see them consulting the morality of the people, but encouraging them in all the methods of deceit, chicanery, and perjury.

The ill effects of spirituous liquors upon the English vulgar, are strongly represented by their own countrymen. I hope these imputations are false, and that the English are not such entire brutes, as their interested friends would represent them. In any small intercourse I have had with the north of England, I have seen no such instances of insobriety; but if it should be so, there is no reason why the Scots should be punished for the infirmities of the English. There is a great difference in the constitutions, as well as the climates of different kingdoms; and the same law may be advantageous to one, and destructive to another. To make this appear, I shall quote some observations of an ingenious author, I mean Baron Montesquieu,

[ 16 ]

Montesquieu, in his book of *The spirit of the laws*, in that chapter wherein he treats of the laws relative to the sobriety of the people.

In warm countries, the aqueous part of the blood loses itself greatly by perspiration; it must therefore be supplied by a like liquid. Water is therefore of admirable use; strong liquors would coagulate the globules of blood that remain after transfusing of the aqueous humour.

In cold countries, the aqueous part of the blood is very little evacuated by perspiration; they may therefore make use of spirituous liquors, without danger of coagulating the blood. They are full of humours; consequently strong liquors, which give a motion to the blood, are proper for these countries.

The law of Mahomet, which prohibits the drinking of wine, is therefore a law fitted to the climate of Arabia: and indeed before Mahomet's time, water was the common drink of the Arabs. The law which forbade the Carthaginians to drink wine was a law of the climate: In fact, the climate of these countries is pretty near the same.

Such a law would be improper for cold countries, where the climate seems to force them to a kind of natural drunkenness, very different from personal intemperance. Drunkenness prevails over all the world, in proportion to the coldness and humidity of the climate. Go from the equator to our pole, and you will find drunkenness increasing with the degree of latitude: Go from the same equator to the opposite pole, and you will find drunkenness travelling south, as on this side it travels toward the north.

It

[ 17 ]

It is very natural, that where wine is contrary to the climate, and consequently to health, the cause of it should be more severely punished, than in countries where drunkenness produces very few bad effects to the person, fewer to the society, and where it does not make the people mad, but only stupid and heavy. Hence laws which punished a drunken man for the fault he committed, and for his drunkenness, were applicable only to a personal and not a national ebriety. A German drinks through custom, and a Spaniard through choice.

From these observations it may be easily concluded, that the use of spirituous liquors may be more noxious to the brisk and sanguine complexion of the English, than the more cold and phlegmatic temper of the Scotch nation; and that the heat of the southern climates of England may render them more hurtful, than in the cold and frozen counties of North Britain.

If health is really the cause for which distillation is discharged, there is no reason why the English should be saved and we ruined. If our constitutions, if our circumstances are different, our laws and regulations should be different; if distilleries do them harm, let them have none; and if they do us service, let us have them. They have other laws besides, that for reasons and considerations do not extend to Scotland.

The complaints from London of the abuses of malt spirits are terrible; but I hope they are exaggerated. A soldier is represented as standing in a whisky-shop, and calling out to his comrades, "Drunk, my lads, for a penny, dead drunk for two pence." If an intemperate man can get himself drunk



[ 18 ]

drunk so cheap, a sober man can refresh his body, and entertain his friends at a small expence likewise. Every thing must not be discarded that riotous people may abuse; or else religion, liberty, and love must be discarded, for these are often fatally abused. Should the same soldier call to his fellows out of a bawdy-house, "Pox'd, my lads, for two pence, deadly pox'd for four pence; and if you are a very pretty fellow, pox'd for nothing at all;" would that be a good enough reason to prohibit for ever the lawful use of women, and that a law should be made, like the Egyptian law, that every female child should be thrown into the river?

Since I have mentioned the pox, I shall beg leave to quote another passage from B. Montesquieu, shewing the origin thereof.

It is now two centuries since a disease unknown to our ancestors was first transplanted from the new world to ours, and came to attack the human nature even in the very source of life and pleasure. Most of the principal families in the south of Europe were seen to perish by a distemper that was grown too common to be ignominious, and was considered in no other light than in that of being fatal. It was the thirst of gold that propagated the disease; the Europeans went continually to America, and always brought back a new leaven of it. Immortal PITT! how unsanctified is thy glorious scheme to lavish away the treasure of your country, and the blood of your countrymen, to put us in possession of a country that has introduced, and is still propagating such an ugly and loathsome distemper, so fatal to the health and to the lives of the principal families of Britain; but what is more interesting, to the health and lives of the apprentices

[ 19 ]

tices and journeymen-manufacturers in the great city of London. But to be serious, things that are publicly good and beneficial are not to be condemned by law, because vitious people may make a bad use of them. It is only the business and wisdom of the lawgiver to endeavour to prevent and correct their abuses.

With respect to malt spirits, if they are too cheap and vulgar, there is one method by which the law may in a good measure remedy it; a method too which should not be disagreeable in the present urgent necessities of the state; that is, to lay a further additional excise upon it. By that law its prostitute abuse may in good part be prevented, by its additional price. The government will receive the benefit of the old tax and the new, the borrowing of some hundred thousand pounds prevented, and if the war continues, perhaps millions; and likewise the imposing a more burdensome tax to pay the interest of the loan; farmers will be enabled to pay their rents, and gentlemen have the value of their estates; and agriculture, industry, and population be encouraged.

There are likewise complaints against malt spirits in Scotland, and who can doubt but there must be part of reason for them? It is alledged, the porters, cadies, footymen, chairmen, and other labouring people, have a great deal of recourse to these whisky-shops, spend their money, and abuse their health by drams. But indeed among the most sober of them, it is in a certain degree requisite. In a cold climate, when people's business requires them to be standing most part of the day in streets, or working in cold cellars or garrets, or standing many hours of the day in a

D

lane

[ 20 ]

lane at their market, it is reasonable, it is necessary, that they should have a dram to preserve their health, and keep their blood in motion; and if they must have a dram, it is far from being an inconvenience, that it is cheap and wholesome, and our own manufacture.

Though the distilleries are stopped, the use of drams is not prevented. People may still have brandy, they may have the unwholesome stuff made of melasses, and the price not much higher than whisky. If spirits are poison, as they are pleased to call them, why are we allowed the use of foreign poison? Are we prohibited the use of our own, that we may have more stomach to devour the poison of all the world? It is not health, it is not morality, that is the motive of the prohibition: if the spirits, or the materials from which the spirits are made, come from beyond seas; if the merchants have their profit by it, you may ruin your health, you may damn your souls, and none shall regard it.

Is it not enough, that gentlemen should burden their estates with taxes, and venture their lives in war for the defence and increase of commerce? Must the evil be doubled to them by sinking the value of their estates? Must they be ruined that the merchants may have but a trifle more?

You Caledonian patriots, and gallant officers wounded in the plains of Minden, and on the banks of St Lawrence; you who have rendered your names immortal, and have outshone even the glory of Cressy and Agincourt; you who have secured your country's honour, and extended her overspreading commerce, must you return back to your estates with crazy constitutions, and

[ 21 ]

and debilitated limbs, and find your livings not only diminished with taxes, but rendered of no value, by the prohibition of the produce of your grounds? Is this the reward for which you bled so gloriously, that you must spend your remaining days, not only in pain, but in poverty and sorrow?

Is it not a pity, that our gallant, our royal Highlanders, whose martial intrepidity, whose irresistible ardor has quite extinguished the fire of Gallic fortitude, and made unsubdued cities surrender unattacked, should be obliged to return to their frozen native climate, to their cold inhospitable mountains, and not be allowed a dram of their own usquebaugh, to cherish their exhausted spirits, and to circulate the heroic blood now freezing in their veins; and that they should see their sons already deprived of their darling arms, their beloved philebogs; but now likewise of their native refreshment, the product of their own barren glens, the manufacture of their mothers; and which the coldness of their country makes almost as necessary to them as their mother's milk? Shall they be deprived of every peculiarity that secures and animates their warlike dispositions, at the very time when their courage is so gloriously employed for the service and honour of their country?

It is true, people's condition is never in such a bad state but it may be in a worse. The merchants interest accords in one point with their inclination; they shall be always allowed the privilege of a snuff.

The generous British spirit brings no calamities along with her conquests; the subdued countries, with the change of their masters, find only their

[ 22 ]

poverty changed to affluence, and oppression to liberty. Trade flourishes with new vigour on the banks of Senegal, and along the romantic brooks of Guadalupe; and it will soon flourish on the craggy rocks of Cape Breton; and I hope by the frozen lakes of Canada. Shall poverty alone be felt on this side the Tweed? Shall North-Britain's sons, whose courage has been so instrumental in procuring these commercial conquests, find themselves exposed to unavoidable depression for the mistaken interests of commerce? What will our country's glory and victories avail us, if we are undone? In that case, our consolation will very much resemble the condition of what we are told of one of the rebels that was mortally wounded at the battle of Preston: When his comrades were carrying him to be buried, he pleaded to have it delayed, because he might recover: "No, no," says one of them, "you no live, you must be buried, Duncan; but hae good cheer, we won the battle."

If you are sensible, Gentlemen, of the injury done you, and done the country, by the prohibition, it is at least your duty to attempt to have the injury redressed. Grievances are never redressed by silent submission, and plaintless sufferings, but by vigilant applications, and ceaseless struggles. Some pretend, that they are damped at present to make application, on account of the glory of Mr PITT's administration, who has been set up and supported by the mercantile interest. It is indulging a very unjust suspicion, that Mr PITT will support oppression and injury. He is more patriot than to abridge, or suffer to be abridged, the property and privilege of any interest, or of any place in the kingdom, if they are not wanting to themselves.

He

[ 23 ]

He is more a politician than to cherish any dissension of interest; which, in the event, can only tend to the prejudice and ruin of both, and to his own discredit. If you make it appear, that you are wronged, you have all the reason in the world to expect that you will be righted; if you properly exert your influence, you must be righted.

If any of your representatives tell you, that they confess you are injured; but that they believe, it is not now capable of being redressed; that is telling you, that you are already enslaved. If that is the case, these gentlemen have made very ill use of the trust reposed in them, if, without any remonstrance or opposition, they have suffered you to be brought into so fatal a dilemma. Make them sensible, that they shall never have your suffrage at a future election, if they do not exert themselves for the recovering the natural value of your estates, on which your power and influence depends, as well as your country's preservation.

If the increase and encouragement of trade adds to the riches of the merchants, and if the sinking the value of your estates increases your poverty, the relative equilibrium of our constitution is destroyed; and in that case it is vain for you to expect honour, preferment, and places, through their courtesy. Only make your power and your authority respectable, and all these things shall of course be added unto you.

Consider, Gentlemen, that it is the duty of every one of you to exert yourselves for your own interest, and the public welfare. If those neglect the means of preserving the interest of their country, whose mere peculiar duty it is to preserve it, the more it is your duty to exert yourselves to supply the

the

[ 24 ]

the defect. When the cause is public and interesting, it is not enough, that you will passively join in it; it is your duty to incite, and animate, and rouse your sleeping countrymen. Can any thing be more interesting, than the maintaining the value of your estates, and your independence and influence; the support of your wives, your children, and posterity; the preservation of your farmers, and even the supply of the government, and the equilibrium of the British constitution; and even the advantage of trade and commerce itself? And this last is what I shall attempt to make appear in the subsequent part of this discourse, *viz.* That the prohibition of malt spirits will be prejudicial to the merchants themselves; and I shall beg leave to address myself to the gentlemen of the mercantile interest.

GENTLEMEN,

Your skill, industry, and vigilance in carrying on the various branches of commerce and manufacture, by which Great Britain is arrived at that high pitch of power and grandeur that she now maintains, deserve the highest approbation and applause; but you must allow me to differ from those who imagine, that the interest of trade can be benefited by the prohibition of distillation; the intention of which prohibition is to lower the price of grain, which of consequence must discourage agriculture, and sink the fortunes of the landed interest.

Corn is the staff of life; and therefore agriculture is the principal business of mankind; trade, war, and manufacture depend upon it, as the *primum mobile* of the whole. The materials of useful manufactures have many times premiums granted for their

[ 25 ]

their encouragement; can it be expected that agriculture can be made to flourish by discouragement? Such a considerable check to industry will soon diminish the quantity of grain, raised more than what is consumed by the distilleries. The first effect of the prohibition will be to diminish the livings of the landed interest; and the second will be, to diminish the raising of grain; and these must be the consequences as necessarily as the effect follows the cause.

If people have not a proportionable return of their money, and a reasonable reward of their industry, they will forsake that way of business, and betake themselves to another. No man will pursue that kind of business long, where nothing but poverty and contempt can be earned. If agriculture turns despicable, and trade flourishing, the mouths will increase, and the meat decrease; and then the decrease of meat will again discourage trade. The body politic must always be disjointed and out of order, till nature is allowed to bring things back again to its necessary equilibrium.

Trade no doubt is the fountain of riches, and increases the number of the inhabitants, both by introducing foreigners, and encouraging matrimony and population. These numerous inhabitants will have occasion for more grain; and that extraordinary demand will necessarily augment its price; the augmented price will encourage the improvement of ground: for money is the nerves of every occupation; and thereby grain will be raised and increase as the subjects increase to consume it. If the grounds hitherto thought arable are not sufficient, the augmented price will make these moors, and heaths, and barren soils capable of bearing the expence

[ 26 ]

expence of tillage and improvement, which were not capable of it when the price of grain was low; and these will raise an additional quantity of grain for the increasing population. If any gain is made by these improvements, it increases the livings of gentlemen and farmers, who are thereby enabled to consume the commodities of commerce and manufacture. So that in a free country it is eternally necessary, that trade and agriculture must flourish, or be depressed together, and continually go hand in hand.

The raising of more grain on those barren soils, is not the only advantage in the case. Tillage requires a great many more hands to carry it on than pasturage; and a cultivated country always supplies its own labourers. That consequently increases the number of the people; and not only supplies grain, but raises a nursery of useful and laborious soldiers, sailors, and tradesmen to defend and carry on the extensive business of the kingdom. This is not a naked supposition. It is no uncommon thing to see a parish in the country, where a dozen of store-masters rented the whole, with no more servants than each of them a shepherd and his dog, and a milk-maid or two, now stocked with many hundreds of hardy inhabitants.

It is a great advantage to a trading nation to have within itself a sufficient number of laborious inhabitants, capable to defend it against its enemies, and to supply the different branches of manufacture and commerce; and by consuming the commodities, to increase the taxes necessary for the support of the government; and likewise to have within herself a sufficient quantity of food, to support these her numerous and industrious inhabitants.

The

[ 27 ]

The disadvantage of the want of these, the fates of Tyre and Carthage do sufficiently demonstrate to us; as the fate of the republic of Holland will be an evidence to our posterity.

If the price of grain is lowered by the prohibition to any considerable extent, and the value of every other commodity continues high, the fore-mentioned barren soils will again become incapable of bearing the expence of tillage; and if the proprietor can get nothing by tillage, he will let them go again into grass; chusing rather to have a small rent, than none at all; and so the country will depopulate in the same manner that it increased, and the quantity of grain be immensely diminished. And to tell the truth, this temper for turning the laboured ground into grass, has become too fashionable already, and perhaps one of the means of occasioning our late scarcity. The turn which gentlemen have taken to grazing and inclosing, their fondness of imitating England, and their jealousy of cottars, has gone a good way to depopulate the country already.

These barren and cultivated counties are the best nurseries of hardy and laborious subjects; for grain is a more wholesome and prolific nourishment than flesh, and supplies both the mind and body with fewer vicious humours: And besides, the poverty of their country makes them more easily get over the prejudice of staying at home, and makes them more ready and useful instruments of carrying on the branches of war, trade, and manufacture. If that resource of manufacturers and labourers should fail, its consequences will soon be remarkably felt in the kingdom.

E

England,

[ 28 ]

England, almost all inclosed, and addicted to pasturage, is not able to supply a sufficiency of hands for her extensive business; and even to carry on their country-labour, servants must be enticed with high wages from Scotland. Now, if Scotland should be brought into the same situation with England, where would hands be got to improve the whole? It is true the ruined farmers, and the depopulation of the country, might serve the end for a year or two, but the nursery would be lost for ever.

There is nothing makes labour so dear as scarcity of labourers, and that is a principal reason why tradesmen and manufacturers give such high wages in England. People's natural fondness for their own country will keep them in it, unless they are enticed abroad with higher profit. You may see then, Gentlemen, that as spirits are necessary to health in our cold northern climate; so the encouragement of agriculture in Scotland tends both to her own benefit, and to the benefit of the trade of England.

It is a never-failing observation, that when a country turns rich, all its commodities, and wages of labour, turn higher of course. If it is really true that trade, navigation, and merchandise have enriched this country to such an extent, that the wages of manufacture are become so high that we can no longer undersell our neighbours, it is an evidence that our trade is arrived at its proper exaltation; for every thing has its height, and the utmost extent of its advancement. Though mens appetites are insatiable, the nature of things has its proper bounds and limits. If we cannot become

[ 29 ]

come richer unless we become poorer, let us be satisfied with the high degree we have already attained; and rather let our neighbours have a share, than to throw our own country into convulsions, vainly and unjustly grasping to monopolize the whole.

But, Gentlemen, you have fallen upon a scheme to reconcile both. You have found out an expedient to make one half of the country poor, and the other rich; and I think it would have been but fair and equitable to have thrown the dice, and given the landed interest an equal chance for it, whether their profit or yours should have been made the sacrifice to commerce.

But, Gentlemen, you should consider, that trade consists in importation as well as exportation. If the livings of the nobility and gentry are diminished, you will prejudice one of the best branches of your customers for taking off your hands the richest and most valuable of all foreign commodities. There is nothing affords a nobler and more advantageous scene of trade, than a rich and opulent country at home; take care then that what you get by one hand, you are not throwing away with the other.

But, Gentlemen, I would fain know how you can dispose of your riches, of your millions for the time to come. You have for some years bygone laid out money in carrying on all the branches of trade to their utmost extent; you have fitted out a world of privateers to cruise upon the enemy; you have lent the government twenty millions to carry on the war; and you would have lent the French as many millions more, if you had been suffered

[ 30 ]

suffered to do it. The public labours almost under an unsufferable load of taxes, to pay the immense interest, and it is only the hopes of a glorious and speedy issue of the war that supports them under the oppressive weight. How would these immense sums have been employed had the war never commenced? Do you think you will always be able to foment wars, and that the nation will be able to pay the interest always? No! The public can take very few more of your millions off your hand. The burden is very near advanced to the utmost extent of the nation's strength; and if you diminish their livings, the load will still turn more insufferable. What then will your riches avail you when they can be of no benefit to you, but to incumber you, like the iron coin of Laconia? But here I must stop short; I had forgot that you may purchase lands with your riches, and in that case the prohibition will answer the ends of policy abundantly well. The sinking the value of gentlemens estates will ruin many of them, and oblige them to sell their estates; and the value of ground being diminished, it will make them sell them at a lower price. This, I am persuaded, is not your intention: if it were, it would be more political than equitable. But whether it is your intention or not, I think the event must follow, as the necessary consequence of the prohibition.

But there is a consideration still more alarming: If the burden becomes intolerable, the consequence is, that it will be entirely thrown off. If you add exasperation to oppression, the landed interest will  
 exercise

[ 31 ]

exercise their patience but to a certain extent. The spirit of liberty is not yet extenuated. Your present attempt, Gentlemen, to sink the value of their estates may tend to hasten an approaching event, which will discover that all your millions are only imaginary, and that ambition rarely fails to destroy itself.

F I N I S.

0342

The first part of the document  
 is a list of names and  
 addresses. The names are  
 listed in the first column  
 and the addresses in the  
 second column. The names  
 are: [Illegible names]  
 and the addresses are: [Illegible addresses]

The second part of the document  
 is a list of [Illegible text]  
 and the third part is a list of [Illegible text]

The fourth part of the document  
 is a list of [Illegible text]

The fifth part of the document  
 is a list of [Illegible text]

The sixth part of the document  
 is a list of [Illegible text]

The seventh part of the document  
 is a list of [Illegible text]

The eighth part of the document  
 is a list of [Illegible text]

The ninth part of the document  
 is a list of [Illegible text]

The tenth part of the document  
 is a list of [Illegible text]

The eleventh part of the document  
 is a list of [Illegible text]

The twelfth part of the document  
 is a list of [Illegible text]

The thirteenth part of the document  
 is a list of [Illegible text]

The fourteenth part of the document  
 is a list of [Illegible text]

The fifteenth part of the document  
 is a list of [Illegible text]

The sixteenth part of the document  
 is a list of [Illegible text]

The seventeenth part of the document  
 is a list of [Illegible text]

The eighteenth part of the document  
 is a list of [Illegible text]

The nineteenth part of the document  
 is a list of [Illegible text]

The twentieth part of the document  
 is a list of [Illegible text]