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A.M.C.

STRICTURES
ON THE
TRUE CAUSE
OF
THE PRESENT ALARMING SCARCITY,
&c. &c.

[Entered at Stationers' Hall.]

STRICTURES
 ON THE
True Cause
 OF THE PRESENT ALARMING
 SCARCITY OF GRAIN
 AND
 OTHER PROVISIONS;
 AND
 A PLAN FOR PERMANENT RELIEF:
 HUMBLY SUBMITTED TO
Public Consideration,
 BY
 ALEXANDER ANNESLEY.
 WITH AN
 Historical Deduction
 OF THE
 PRICES OF PROVISIONS.
 INTERSPERSED WITH
 VARIOUS MATTERS
 CONNECTED WITH THE
Commerce and Navigation of Great Britain.
 TOGETHER WITH
 A CHRONOLOGICAL ACCOUNT
 OF THE SEVERAL
 Statutes, Proclamations, and Parliamentary Regulations,
For controuling the Markets,
 AND
 PREVENTING MONOPOLY, ENGROSSING, &c. &c.
From the Norman Conquest to the present Æra.

— Quid non mortalia pectora cogis,
 Auri sacra fames? — VIRGIL.

DEDICATED TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE WILLIAM PITT,
 CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER.

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1800.

TO THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE WILLIAM PITT,
CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER,
ESQ.

SIR,

IN dedicating this little Work to you, I rather seek to honour my own name than exalt yours, which can receive no additional lustre from *my* feeble attempts at panegyric; yet a consciousness of my own insignificance cannot stifle the admiration your splendid talents have inspired; nor can I suppress the impulse I feel to pay that tribute of applause to one so justly entitled to every commendation.

You, like every other great minister, from a Mæcenas to a Cardinal Ximenes, and from the latter to your illustrious Father, have found enemies as well as adulators. *Adulation* I shall doubtless be charged with by many an irascible politician; but conscious sincerity fortifies me against their cavils. It is your conduct as a minister that I make the theme of eulogy.

The conduct of public men is certainly open to discussion. Censure, when they merit it, is generally dealt out to them with a liberal hand; but when their conduct claims our highest admiration, an invidious principle, unhappily too prevalent, robs them of half their well-earned praise.

In all ages mankind have discovered an unaccountable propensity to extol the past and depreciate the present: this foible prevails more in our own country than in any other; but impartial and dispassionate persons will judge of men and measures on more rational grounds than vulgar prejudices or the ephemeral fluctuations of popularity,—neither furnishing a fair criterion of the true character of a minister.

To form a correct judgment of the abilities of a minister, we must advert to the effects of his administration. *You* were enveloped with difficulties unparalleled in the history of men; *you* had not, like your predecessors, an inexhaustible repertory to resort to for governing *your* conduct in *office*. New and perilous as *your* situation became, surrounded by foreign and domestic traitors, in momentary expectation of a most

dreadful explosion, you nobly retained the helm, steered the agitated bark of state through political oceans unknown and unexplored,—when the lowering heavens apparently threatened its instant and irrevocable annihilation—when despair had marked every countenance, and the destructive torrent rushed in at every chink,—in that portentous moment, when the frightful abyss seemed opening to swallow all, you, with transcendent fortitude, piloted the buffeted state-bark!

“ So when an angel, by divine command,
 “ With rising tempests shakes a guilty land,
 “ Such as, of late, o’er pale-Britannia pass’d,
 “ Calm and serene he drives the furious blast;
 “ And, pleas’d th’ Almighty’s orders to perform,
 “ Rides in the whirlwind and directs the storm.”

The increasing commerce of the kingdom,—the glorious attitude she has assumed on the face of the globe, after every insidious attempt to prostrate her greatness and sully her naval glories,—surely demand our applause, and claim our highest admiration. But, alas! all sublunary joys are fleeting: we no sooner become eased from one dreadful apprehension, than another succeeds:—*famine*, in the midst of *plenty*! scarcity, at a

time of *unequalled exuberance!* and *fabtious dearth*, in spite of *superior fecundity!* now threaten us with all their concomitant horrors! —To *you*, Sir, the country look up for relief; from *you* they claim it,—and from you, I trust, they will receive it. The name of PITT must then live in historic page as the *best*, as well as *greatest*, minister of his time—and be by all admired with an enthusiasm equal to that of

SIR,

Your most respectful, most devoted,

And humble servant,

THE AUTHOR.

STRICTURES

ON THE

TRUE CAUSE

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&c. &c.

Homo sum, humani nihil à me alienum puto.

TERENCE.

THE enormous price of provisions being a subject of the highest importance, and coming home to the feelings of every individual member of society, whether he moves in the higher, the middle, or the humbler spheres of life, it becomes well worth the attention of those who possess means and opportunity to investigate the cause of such an evil, and enter upon an impartial discussion of the erroneous system to which the present dearth is ascribable, and, in the course of such an investigation, to suggest such plans as may ultimately tend to prevent similar distresses.

I cannot but lament my inability to do justice to so intricate and complex a subject, aware as I am of the deep researches and laborious exertions of some of the ablest writers in the most civilised as well as enlightened parts of Europe on this momentous topic. I tremble, therefore, at my presumption in entering the lists; but when I reflect, that, if success crowns my humble efforts, mil-

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lions of my fellow-creatures may be benefited—and, if I fail, the abortive attempts of an obscure individual can do no mischief to the cause I have undertaken to advocate—I am emboldened to hazard a few observations thereon.

Unconnected with, and consequently unbiassed by, party predilections, my sentiments are the genuine effusions of a mind responsive to the cries of surrounding thousands, sinking under pressures as insupportable as they have hitherto been found irremediable. Impressed with the most anxious solicitude to administer to their relief, I am urged to commit my ideas on this distressing subject to public inspection, from a hope that some abler pen may, by adopting my hints, frame a system capable of diffusing general benefit, and affording permanent relief.

Much has been imputed to the expensive war we are at present engaged in, and to which our calamitous dearths have by many been ascribed; but on a candid and impartial investigation it will be found that the war has rather been the *pretext* for, than the *cause* of, the present high price of every article of subsistence. We must not form our judgment of the political and fiscal circumstances of nations by the rules of appreciating the occurrences of private life. It may with mathematical precision be demonstrated, that our increased expenses have been the natural result of additional resources pouring in upon us from every quarter; nay I will undertake to prove, that a large proportion of the subsidies paid to our allies, as well as of the immense contributions our inveterate foes have levied on them, have found their way to our coffers!—Britain stands a political phenomenon on the face of the globe! and Posterity will, in her history, contemplate with admiration the noble struggle she has made under circumstances of depression that must have appalled

the strongest minds! Posterity will know how to appreciate the merits of those who, in the day of nerveless despondence, and paralyzed horror, placed themselves in the breach, with a fortitude unparalleled, and a magnanimity unrivalled, in the annals of nations! Posterity will exult in the noble and imposing attitude she assumed when the rest of Europe were crouching at the feet of the monstrous *chimæra*, and when the greatest potentates that attempted to tame her were panic-struck by a *bare look* from her *Corfican keeper*!

It has, however, been observed, by authority to which I bow with all due deference, “That a protracted war, at an expense of sixty-four millions per annum, must eventually be ruin.” This assertion could not be controverted were we in other circumstances; but, in our present situation, the *appearance* is more alarming than the *reality*. The immense increase of commerce from the year 1792 to the present period exceeds all previous calculation; the total of British manufactures and foreign merchandise exported, and of goods imported, in the year 1799, amounting to the enormous sum of 123,706,955*l.* 12*s.* 7*d.* If to this is added the annual landed produce, considerably more than 90,000,000*l.* (although, by various modifications, and in many instances by unfair evasions, it appears, by the produce of the income-tax, to be no more than 55,000,000*l.*) and if we likewise add the funded interest (exclusive of what is paid to foreigners), making 15,000,000*l.* besides other innumerable lesser resources, not necessary to particularise in this paper—the annual *circulation* of *convertible* property cannot be taken at less than 230,000,000*l.* sterling; *seven-tenths* of which re-produces capital, and again becomes applicable to the various uses of tillage, manufactures, commerce, navigation, building, repairs, and

general improvements; while the remaining *three-tenths* are sunk and absorbed in subsistence, and under the general head of unproductive expenditure. Thus a vast circulating balance is annually left in the state for the performance of all its necessary functions, without trenching on its capital. If the facts bear me out in my political arithmetic, (and which I trust they will, on the minutest investigation, be found to do,) I would ask whence come these resources? I boldly aver, the present war has created a great part of those *resources!* The subversion of the trade of Holland, the capture of her colonies, the almost total annihilation of French manufactures, the shutting up the ports of Spain and interruption of her American and Indian commerce, the humiliation of Venice and Genoa, has contributed to throw the commerce of the globe into the arms of *Britain!* to say nothing of America, which would, in all probability, have had the same intercourse with us had we been blessed with an earlier peace.

But I would by no means have it inferred that, in adducing these observations, I am an advocate for a *bellum internecionum*: I lament as much as any man existing the dire necessity we are under of carrying on so dreadful a warfare, in spite of the obvious advantages resulting to this nation from its continuance; but I will maintain what has been generously conceded to me, namely, that "*Peace in some respects may be dangerous.*" That is precisely the doctrine I wish to inculcate. God forbid that I should urge the protraction of the war, could a safe and permanent peace be obtained! But experiments in politics are always hazardous, and become doubly so when we are compelled to try the efficacy of pacific measures with a *treacherous* enemy in the *zenith* of his power; who, in peace or war, would still seek our destruction. From

such invidious neighbours we must look for additional securities to give permanence to compacts of *amity*, or we should only refrain from hostilities to give our rivals new breath to re-engage in the arduous contest.

An expenditure of *sixty-four millions* is, beyond doubt, an alarming circumstance; but national expenditure must always be branched under two heads, that is, the productive and the unproductive. By *productive* expenses I mean those disbursements which circulate in our own country or its dependencies, and create, or rather renew, capital, which thereby becomes a mere change of property from its former possessor to a succeeding one, without inducing any very considerable diminution of the national stock in its operations. By unproductive expenses I mean such as are sunk or absorbed by consumption, or, on being exported, tend to form new capital to a foreign nation, and unlikely to find its way back in the course of commercial circulation. Such expenditure is certainly an inevitable loss to the community: but so long as our real profits, of whatever nature they may be, exceed this latter head of expenditure, so long shall we continue an affluent, a free, and an independent, nation.

If the various and immense sums expended in the war were totally sunk, or wholly absorbed by absolute consumption or final expatriation, so as never to find its way back or re-circulate in a new form or shape, then, I admit, our ruin would be as speedy as inevitable: but national expenditure bears no analogy to private expense; the one merely flows to the extremities, but finds its way back to the heart of the empire with astonishing velocity, resuscitating the body politic, invigorating the entire frame, and imparting new energies to the state; while private or individual expense ends where it began, and, like a torrent precipitated from stupendous rocks, can

never make its way back to the source whence it was dashed. Thus the one is a mere transfer of convertible property from one description of subjects, to the contemporary, and generally the less opulent, members of the same state, who, by productive labour, are enabled to obtain a part of property which might otherwise have only remained in the coffers of the rich; while the other is a total and irrecoverable loss, that can in no shape revert to its original proprietor.

It was to this secret, but certain, operation of fiscal circulation, that Holland became enabled, for more than *eighty years*, to contend with the then potent monarchy of Spain in one of the most extensive wars that Europe ever witnessed; and that, too, under the disadvantage of fighting her battles with mercenary troops, against the finest armies and the ablest generals of that or any other age: but by her fleets wintering in her own harbours, and making her ports their home, and expending there the riches they acquired by their captures, added to their immense and unrivalled commerce, they not only supported their prodigious expenses with ease, but the state became enriched to a degree exceeding all practical calculation!

In like manner did the less brilliant republic of Genoa, about three centuries since, carry on a most burthensome war with Venice, then her most formidable and implacable rival, at an expense so enormous that she must inevitably have sunk under its pressure, had not her immense debts been contracted with her own subjects, who, by their prodigious commerce, were enabled to support the state by *their loans*; and, in consequence of erecting the celebrated bank of St. George, they effected the apparent difficult operation of converting those very debts into fresh resources for the government, by a constant creation and interior circulation of *new capital*, making its

way progressively into the coffers of the *state*; and, by that gradual and regular re-action of circulating media, enabling her to perform all her political functions and financial operations with reciprocal facility. *Thus the problem of a state becoming richer from its interior expenditure may be fairly solved.* National riches and national happiness, however, are not always concomitant blessings: ancient as well as modern history demonstrate the fallacy of a contrary doctrine: but national *affluence* is most certainly essential to national *power*, and as indispensably necessary to the independent existence of the body politic as the vital blood in the human body is for the regular operation of the animal functions. Without affluence a state becomes feeble, totters to its centre, and is at length wholly swallowed by some rapacious neighbour. Without vital blood to animate the human frame——But it were an insult to the understanding of my reader were it necessary to remind him of the inevitable fatality that must ensue.

Having premised these observations, as essential to the introduction of the plans I am about to propose for general relief, it becomes necessary to animadvert on the erroneous system which, in my humble opinion, has been productive of the evils we complain of, and hazard a few general remarks on the various causes that have had so pernicious a tendency, before I explain my system; and then state the fluctuations in the price of grain, especially wheat, and other articles of sustenance, from the Norman conquest to the present times; and likewise the various measures that have, during so long a period, been adopted by our ancestors, as well as those resorted to in our days, during the several dearths that have prevailed in this country from that epocha.

It is not to any physical alteration of our soil that we

are to attribute the recent and present scarcity, but to the material change which has taken place in the minds and manners of its inhabitants. The rage for accumulating wealth, which pervades all ranks in society, has absorbed the social virtues: to the generous ardour, the uniform industry, and the noble disinterestedness, which animated the hospitable bosoms of our ancestors, has succeeded an almost universal principle of rapacity; and a thirst for factitious refinement has been substituted for simplicity of manners, and the blunt but manly integrity of a once-valued and respected yeomanry!

If the amazing decrease of every species of produce is not owing to any physical alteration in our soil, to what cause is so supernatural a change in the space of forty years to be ascribed? Or is our population so wonderfully increased in that short period, that, instead of exporting grain to the amount of *eight millions* annually, (which was actually the case in the years 1744, 1745, 1746, 1747, and 1748, as appears by the bounties then paid, the entries outward, and a table laid before Parliament, that the average medium of exports for those five years amounted to 8,007,948*l.* sterling, at the price of from 35*s.* to 50*s.* per quarter,) we should now be driven to import grain to the amount of upwards of ten millions, making a balance against the nation, in those articles, of upwards of eighteen millions sterling! There is something so very mysterious in the wonderful change, that it involuntarily leads me to follow up the remark by a string of queries, rather than a feeble attempt to develop the cause! I would then inquire of the *agriculturist* how it has happened that superior improvements in aration and tillage have caused sterility instead of increased fecundity in our soil? I would fain learn why *ours* is the only country in the *universe* where *exuberant* and *plentiful* harvests produce

scarcity, and even *famine*? By what inexplicable phenomenon has the *increasing value* of land, and unrivalled *opulence* of the *farmer*, resulted from *defective crops*, *heavy losses*, and *ruinous seasons*? I would gladly know by what curious and latent process of nature *successful tillage* in *England* operates in an *inverse ratio*? Or has that venerable old lady *Britannia*, after presiding so long over our isle with unfulfilled reputation, afflicted her sons with a more than *Babylonian* confusion of language, that, by the strangest perversion, they substitute the term *dearth* for the more appropriate one of *plenty*? Will it not be prudent in our senate to consult the mystic oracles of *Mark-lane* and *Bear-key*, more ænigmatical in their responses than the ancient oracles of *Pythian Apollo* or the *Cumæan Sybils*? How it has happened, that *some* of the mushroom-gentry, who pay their devotions to the altar of *Mammon*, and even offer *human sacrifice* to propitiate the *God*, have, from their *vast losses*, and the *oppressions* heaped on their *trade*, come to vie with the ancient nobility of the kingdom in the splendour of their *villas* and glare of their *equipages*? Let me prevail on them to furnish the people with a clue to extricate them from the labyrinth, lest they should be devoured by that dreadful minotaur, *public indignation*! But, above all, let us inquire how those pagan worshippers of *Ceres*, under which description I class *some* of the *millers* and *mealmen*, who, although denied initiation in her *Eleusynian* mysteries, have been certainly *fully* instructed in *those* of her *son-in-law*!—let us ask these personages by what *new alchymy* their *asserted distress* has been transmuted into *prosperity*, their *ruin* into *affluence*? Nor should we omit interrogating that benevolent order of beings, the *minor bakers*, (I mean not that they are *minus* in *consequence*, but simply in *weights*,) how they have contrived to *make fortunes* by their *losses*, and

become *affluent* from a *depreciated trade*? as many of this *persecuted* race have actually sworn they were *undone*, and their fortunes wholly *sunk*, by continuing so *ruinous a business*!—But I entreat the reader's pardon for detaining him so long from the main object I have in view, *viz.* the pointing out the plan of relief: yet I apprehended that a synopsis of this *tragic drama*, with some account of the *dramatis personæ*, would tend to unravel the plot, and accelerate the *dénouement*, if our *acting managers* would somewhat more narrowly pry into what is doing behind the scenes.—To proceed, then:—

When we reflect on the obvious advantages we possess—the natural fertility of our island—the unbounded freedom of its inhabitants—the security of property—the excellence and impartiality of our laws—the liberal and constant encouragement so uniformly held out for improvement in superior cultivation—the immense number of cattle bred for all the purposes of aration and tillage—the numerous canals for facilitating the regular transfusion of its produce—the various and ingenious mechanical implements for agricultural convenience—the incomparable roads for the safe and speedy communication of every part of the cultivated soil with the market-towns—the prodigious number of coasting-vessels for carrying the product of the maritime parts of the island to the great corn-marts of the kingdom—When we (I must again repeat) reflect on these striking advantages, we are naturally led to conclude, that the alarming dearth so generally complained of must owe its origin to the wrong measures that have hitherto been pursued, which have been greatly aggravated by the defective regulations that have been adopted to remedy the evil.

It then follows, of course, that new systems must be resorted to for remedying evils which old maxims have

been found inadequate to remove, or even ameliorate. A great deal has been said and written on the subject of forestalling, engrossing, and regrating, and particularly on monopolies, as well as the dangerous combination of a few great capitalists withholding a regular supply of grain for the most nefarious purposes. To some, or all, of these causes, the *fabtitious* scarcity we have so long experienced has been ascribed. This may in *part* be true, but cannot to the *extent* of the evil complained of. The calamity is too general; were it partial, many of the wretches who prey on their fellow-creatures, and aggravate their distress, would be much *oftener* detected.

I do not mean to calumniate any man, or accuse any individuals, of enormities which would call forth the execrations of society, if the perpetration of such nefarious proceedings could be legally proved against them: the existing laws of the country, so ably and virtuously administered by the noble persons who preside in our tribunals, are fully competent to punish such high misdemeanors; but it unfortunately happens that there are too many implicated in the crimes I have enumerated to give a reasonable hope of detecting those detestable vultures who devour the *famished* carcases of their fellow-creatures.

Unfortunately for the community, there are so many participating in the profits resulting from engrossing, regrating, forestalling, and monopoly, that convictions, in such cases, are extremely rare in our courts, and have in but too many instances been found almost impracticable. Can it be supposed that the farmer, who receives an advanced price for his produce, will quarrel with the monopoliser who gives such advanced price? Is it reasonable to suppose that the wretched tools of the latter will *impeach*, much less *prosecute*, their employers? And how is

it possible to convict the culprits, when so many are benefited by their delinquency?

But, however obvious these abuses may be, yet it must be observed that great care must be taken in establishing controuling regulations, in order that the spirit of enterprise may receive no check, or the natural stimulus to industry be diverted or interrupted; on the contrary, additional encouragement must be held out to promote husbandry rather than arrest the arm of industry by multiplying penal statutes, against the due enforcement of which so many obstacles are thrown in the way: the great difficulty, therefore, is how to draw the line between *legal profit* and *public plunder*. My aim is to afford the former a wide field to range in, and to render the latter impracticable by removing the temptation.

A wide distinction certainly exists in laying restraints on articles of *prime necessity*, or on commodities peculiarly denominated *mercantile articles*. The one is essential to our existence, the other rather ministering to our luxury than satisfying our natural wants; yet to meddle with either, in a free commercial state, is, I confess, very dangerous. It cannot be denied, however, that the *axiom* so generally adopted of every species of trade, whether in articles of the first necessity or those of luxury, *finding their own level*, has been practically proved *fallacious*, and less solid than we could possibly conceive, from the splendid talents of those who laid it down as an incontrovertible *postulatum*. However impolitic or anti-commercial it may be to lay restraints on manufactures and trading commodities, it will never be denied that the articles essential to the existence of every individual in the state ought not, nay cannot, come within the general rule of *finding its own level*. The practice of our ancestors in-

validate the position, and our statute-books bear indubitable testimony against the practicability of so erroneous a maxim.

In this age of *politeness*, or, we may with more truth write, in this age of licentiousness, when no other scale of *merit* or *virtue* exists but the depth or breadth of the *purse*, *empty praise* has little efficacy, and *applause* without *profit* operates but *coldly* on the human mind!

Probitas laudatur, et alget.

The only emulation now prevailing is, not who shall confer most benefit *on*, but who shall become the richest man *in his country*! Those whose heads and hearts would otherwise reflect honour on the kingdom are unhappily tainted with fordid avarice, not so much arising from a *depraved mind* as a bending to the mania of the times and a childish predilection for the possession of splendid trifles.

The existing abuses imperiously call on the strong arm of government for *aid* and *redress*, and in an especial degree for rendering the conveyance of articles of the first necessity to the hands of the consumer less circuitous. The number of *middle-men* between the agriculturist and the consumer should be lessened, all contracts and sales of grain and cattle, as well as other articles of stock, should be invalid, unless made *bonâ fide* in the open market*, and the corn inspectors' law should be fully enforced, in case of any violation of that statute. Private interests must not be permitted to stand in competition with the

* We are well assured that there are a number of very opulent persons who have entered into contracts for the purchase of corn and cattle for a certain number of years; and, consequently, if a plentiful year ensues, the public can derive no benefit from such a blessing, as the market is governed by these gentlemen, who find means most shamefully to evade the law!

public welfare, and apprehended evils ought never to impede the redress of those already existing: but my plan does not extend to *compulsory sales*, or fixing a *maximum* on the articles of subsistence. My object is to recommend a system for procuring *voluntary*, regular, and speedy supplies, and to point out plans which may ultimately prevent the sending such immense sums out of the kingdom for the purchase of *foreign grain*.

The inefficacy of laws to compel farmers to bring their grain to market, without making it their interest to do so, has been fully demonstrated; to resort to similar measures, therefore, would be as injudicious as impracticable. But the evil does not entirely arise from the farmer withholding supplies. The mischief is only half removed when he has fairly and properly brought his grain for sale; a great number of rapacious agents are permitted to step in between the farmer and the consumer, all of whom struggle for a profit, whereby the price is so considerably enhanced as to place bread almost entirely without the reach of the poor! These leeches should be shook off. The state engine will work with more freedom when its machinery becomes less complex.

The progress of society has placed individuals in *new situations*; and when such new situations stimulate the corrupt part of the community to take advantages which are found to militate against the public weal, it imperiously demands legislative regulation and controul, especially when such regulations may be adopted as are not repugnant to long-established *posulata*, and when a controul may be assumed perfectly consistent with constitutional freedom. Agriculturists, however, must not be coerced, nor should their operations be checked by additional penal discouragements; *remuneration* for *increasing*, rather than *punishment* for withholding *supplies*, should

be held out to that description of men; but *that class of persons*, who act as mere *drones*, and devour the *stores* essential for subsisting the industrious part of the community, should be wholly cast out of the *national hive*.

Experience has fully evinced that our system of corn laws, or rather regulations, have been erroneous—a different system is indispensable; but temporary expedients cannot effectually prevent flagrant abuses, or controul avarice. In malignant diseases, powerful remedies alone can effect radical cures: corrupt minds are wholly influenced by sordid considerations; and, in human institutions, some attention must be paid to the *maxims* as well as *morals* of the people. If avarice cannot be controuled, it should, at least, be turned into a channel where it may glide along *with* and be purified *by* the stream of *public utility*. The benevolent, the disinterested, and the truly virtuous man, stands not in need of penal restrictions; his internal rectitude points out the duty he owes society. But, alas! when we reflect that the virtuous part of mankind consist of a small minority, and that the private interests, intemperate passions, and selfish principles of individuals of almost every rank, dispose them to take advantage of other men's wants, and turn their capitals to the best account, it surely becomes an object well worthy legislative speculation (if I may be permitted to use the phrase), whether a system of *prevention*, in our present predicament, would not be preferable to one of *punishment*.

Public tranquillity is the grand *desideratum* of all laws in a *free state*, and, when once established, should not be disturbed by refined speculations, repugnant, too often, to sound policy and dear-bought experience. The security the laws afford every man to enjoy, in the most plenary and unquestioned manner, his own earnings, and the entire profit of his labour, must be held sacred so long as

it shall be found consistent with public welfare: those employed in tillage should, above all, more peculiarly become objects of public favour and protection; but those, of whatever denomination they may be, who stand between that description of men and the body of the people, making the former instruments for oppressing the latter, certainly merit *execration* more than *protection*. To these principles government should direct their attention, and, by a retrospective view of past evils, devise means for guarding against future mischiefs.

And upon these principles alone can we look for a cure of the evils resulting from engrossing, forestalling, regrating, and monopolies. But in our endeavours to strike off cankered branches, the utmost circumspection should be used, that the trunk receives no injury. The constitutional liberty of the subject must, in all cases, be held sacred; individual privileges, however, must not be permitted to exist in violation of public utility: but, happily for the people, a constitutional redress is at hand, by a recurrence to the practice of our ancestors in times of dearth, without endangering the liberty of the subject.

Monopolies in the body-politic may be compared to virulent ulcers in the human frame; but they must be eradicated by lenients rather than corrosives, the application of which may destroy the sound parts; and thus, in attempting to relieve the subject from a great evil, we may pull a much greater on his head: but temporary remedies have ever been found inefficacious in preventing factitious scarcity—a permanent plan must be adopted, competent to defeat individual rapacity. The public purse alone can accomplish the utter extinction of private monopoly, and to this end the vigorous efforts of government should be directed, rather than to the enacting of additional penal statutes.

The experience of ages has fully demonstrated the inexpediency of multiplying penal laws. If the legislators of antiquity had attended more to the prevention than punishment of crimes, their systems had been less defective. They ought rather to have encouraged the practice of virtue, by pecuniary rewards as well as honourable distinctions, to those in particular who conferred benefits on their fellow-citizens, by the *benevolence* rather than the *splendor* of their actions: *Draco's* sanguinary system engendered more crimes than the more lenient code of *Solon*. Multiplied punishments have ever been found less efficacious in the prevention of crimes and promotion of virtue than a well-timed distribution of rewards to those who have deserved well of their country. Men of great and exalted minds may find the highest gratification in the *applause* of their country, the erection of a statue, or the prospect of having their names transmitted with honour to posterity: but, alas! how few of that description are to be found among the multitude?

But it is not in detecting and punishing *little* criminals that *great crimes* are prevented. The best security a state can have for the morals and virtue of its subjects is to connect their interest with the practice of the social duties, and blend them so intimately together, that the one cannot be practised without promoting the other. These are the fundamental principles of the Chinese government. That wise and ancient state is, perhaps, the only nation on earth who has engrafted a regular system of remuneration in their constitution, which connects the prosperity of the individual with that of the state so happily, that, by a single motion of the grand machine, one and the same operation is performed on both. Surely the principle and the practice may be safely adopted by our country without innovating existing laws or established

maxims. The policy of a great, enlightened, and most ancient state * may be well worthy imitation; and it can be no degradation of sound British sense to incorporate ameliorating systems, emanating from Chinese wisdom, in our code; nothing on earth can equal the cultivation of that fine empire; and cultivation, without every possible encouragement, could never have been brought to such perfection in that *unequal* country, without the highest possible remuneration following its operations.

A great deal has been said and written on the utility of bounties on the exportation of corn, which were originally granted in order to prevent loss to the agriculturist in a plentiful year. This was certainly a wise expedient, and very properly resorted to for the promotion of tillage. But it unfortunately has happened that this plan, like many other well-intended regulations, carried with it an evil unforeseen by the original promoters—for no provision was made against seasons of scarcity, inasmuch as the superfluous corn ought rather to have been reserved in public granaries, agreeably to the practice of other European nations, and even our own ancestors.

By granting bounties on exportation, without either limiting the quantity, or reserving in public granaries a sufficient store to check monopoly, and guard against scarcity, very serious mischief has ensued; it has held out a bait for rapacity to catch at, and thrown temptations in the way of the capitalist that were irresistible.—And when this description of men once tasted with how much facility princely fortunes might be acquired, they soon became callous to other men's complaints; propelled alone by fordid views, they shut their *eyes* as well as *ears* against all

* The Tartars, who conquered China, were so struck with its wise laws and beneficent institutions, that they made no innovations whatever in the government.

moral and *religious* precept, *entrenching* themselves behind such barriers as *legal artillery* could never reach.—Thus the price of wheat was gradually enhanced, and, what was originally intended as an encouragement and reward for superior exertions in tillage, became in fact a very great and almost insupportable burthen on the people—tending more to check the population of the country than any other cause.

Nor was this all—the corn-merchant, not the farmer, for whose sole benefit the measure was intended, became enriched in years of plenty by his immense exports, without any very material advantages resulting to the cultivator of the soil, whose additional profit, arising from the bounty, was only sixpence per bushel; and in years of scarcity, the merchants, by importing foreign grain, acquired immense profits at the expence of a famished multitude, without a single benefit resulting to agriculturists!—Thus a body of men, whom the legislature rather *tolerated* than *encouraged*, stepped in between the *husbandman* and the *consumer*, reaping advantages, intended to confer *general*, not *partial* benefits: and thus avarice converted the plenty of one year to private emolument, instead of general relief, through an oversight in the legislature, who ought to have guarded against rapacity, by retaining a part of the surplus corn of a plentiful year, at a low investment, to meet future exigencies. By neglecting such a provision, the liberality of the legislature has only tended to promote the fordid views of monopolists, who have unhappily seized the opportunity of aggrandising themselves at the *expence* of the *public*.

It may be alleged, thus will it ever be in all human institutions; the private vices of mankind, like pernicious insects, gnawing the roots of the most flourishing plants, will ever destroy regulations, however excellent and well

intended. It is certainly a melancholy truth, that the wisest laws are often prostituted to the vilest purposes. When experience therefore has proved the inefficacy of one measure, we must resort to another; and the one most likely to produce beneficial effects seems to me, that instead of bounties on exportation, bounties on *production* should rather be granted.

Bounties on production would only operate as a single tax, while bounties on exportation certainly become (as an ingenious and excellent author* has truly observed) a double tax on the people at large: and this assertion is demonstrable when we consider that we pay 5s. per quarter for the allowed bounty, and again our proportion of the *enhanced price* of wheat in consequence of the measure; and when the quantity exported in plentiful seasons is adverted to, which, within the last twenty years, has amounted to twelve hundred thousand quarters, the burthen upon the people, becomes enormous!

If the population of the country has increased in so great a degree, that its produce has actually been found inadequate to the people's subsistence, the remedy is happily at hand—more land must immediately be enclosed for cultivation. But if, on the minutest investigation, the dearth should be found to originate in private avarice, the coffers of government are alone competent to defeat the most formidable and extensive combinations. Partial establishments may meet with powerful competitors; and even companies, founded on truly patriotic principles, may have to contend with avaricious legions; but government alone can defeat monopoly, not by additional penal statutes, which can never be enforced while such numbers participate in the crime, or rather the profits resulting from it,

* Dr. A. Smith, in his Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations.

but by meeting the evil in a direct and manly manner.

And the only mode to effect so salutary a purpose is by a bounty on production. The people cannot hesitate between a voluntary grant and a compulsory tax. A bounty on production is a voluntary grant; a bounty on exportation, on the other hand, operates as a compulsory tax on the whole nation. The words of the great author (named in a preceding note) on this topic deserve most serious attention—they are as follows:—“ To encourage
“ the production of any commodity, a bounty upon pro-
“ duction, one would imagine, would have a more direct
“ operation than one on exportation. It would besides
“ impose only one tax upon the people, that which they
“ must contribute in order to pay the bounty. Instead of
“ raising it would lower the price of the commodity in the
“ home market, and thereby, instead of imposing a second
“ tax upon the people, it might, at least in part, repay them
“ for what they had contributed to the first. Bounties on
“ production, however, have been very rarely granted.
“ The prejudices established by the commercial system
“ have taught us to believe that national wealth arises
“ more immediately from *exportation* than from *production*.
“ It has been more favoured accordingly, as the more im-
“ mediate means of bringing money into the country.
“ Bounties upon production, it has been said too, have
“ have been found, by experience, more liable to frauds
“ than those upon exportation. How far this is true I
“ know not. That bounties upon exportation have been
“ abused to many fraudulent purposes is very well known.
“ But it is not the interest of merchants and manufacturers,
“ the great inventors of all these expedients, that the home
“ market should be *overstocked* with their goods, an event

“ which a bounty upon *production* might sometimes occasion. A bounty upon exportation, by enabling them to send abroad the *surplus part*, and to *keep up the price* of what remains in the *home market*, effectually prevents this. Of all the expedients of the mercantile system accordingly, it is the one of which they are the *fonderest*. I have known the different undertakers of some particular works agree privately among themselves to give a bounty out of their own pockets upon the exportation of a certain proportion of the goods which they dealt in. This expedient succeeded so well, that it more than *doubled the price* of their goods in the *home market*, notwithstanding a very considerable *increase in the produce*. The operation of a *bounty upon corn* must have been wonderfully different, if it has lowered the money-price of that commodity. Something like a bounty upon production, however, has been granted upon some particular occasions. The tonnage bounties given to the white-herring and whale fisheries may, perhaps, be considered as somewhat of this nature; they tend directly, it may be supposed, to render the goods *cheaper in the home-market than they otherwise would be*.”

The legislature cannot balance between paying our own subjects a bounty of a few hundred thousand pounds, or sending as many millions out of the kingdom for foreign grain, especially as the countries from whence such immense quantities have been imported take few articles of British manufacture in return; America excepted, who nevertheless has not increased her orders for British commodities, in consequence of our purchasing her superfluous wheat or flour.

The great authority* that at the close of the last session

* Lord Liverpool.

of parliament demonstrated our recent importations to have been no less than 700,000 quarters of grain, for which we paid upwards of 5,600,000 *l.* sterling, is unquestionable. This circumstance must operate very powerfully on the mind of every thinking man. A repetition of such dear-bought supplies must end in ruin!

Every state, indebted for subsistence to other countries, gradually declined; their current specie by degrees disappeared, and their subversion quickly followed. Innumerable examples, both ancient and modern, may be adduced from history to prove the verity of my position. To guard against such future emissions of wealth for articles of consumption is an object of the highest import to the state. Those who possess the power have, I am persuaded, likewise the inclination to adopt every salutary precaution; and power and inclination can never be more beneficially exercised than in remedying flagrant abuses. Every plan proposed should meet with a candid investigation, be the projector ever so insignificant. The greatest discoveries in arts, and some of the most valuable improvements in the sciences, owe their origin to humble and obscure individuals, but were never deemed less valuable on that account.

I shall therefore, without further circumlocution, proceed to state my plan for permanent relief, one part of which is to pay a bounty of five shillings per quarter upon the first two millions of quarters of new wheat that the farmers shall bring to, and, *bona fide*, dispose of, in *open market*, in their respective vicinity. And no grain or other species of provisions should, on any account, be permitted to be sold, or any contract whatever relating to grain or other species of provisions be deemed valid, but such as are made with the utmost publicity in the open

market*. And, to prevent monopoly, it would be advisable to subject all grain (if not other provisions) to the operation of the excise laws! However unpopular such a proposition may be, yet, when we reflect on the immense advantages likely to emanate from the measure, I feel no difficulty in submitting the proposal to legislative consideration; for, without regular returns of the stock in hand and the sales, made in the usual manner that other excised commodities are subjected to, abuses will prevail, and ultimately counteract the best digested plans and most judicious systems. And if any grain should be improperly hoarded by purchasers for selfish purposes, and withheld from the consumer for a given time, then such purchaser should incur the penalties of engrossing, &c.

It would be seen in a short space of time whether the dearth is real or factitious. And if it should happen that wheat, by the adoption of this measure, (of which there

* A decree of Dubois, the prefect of the police in Paris, is well worth attention on this subject.

Forestalling and regrating having prevailed there to an alarming extent, it was decreed "That the dealers are enjoined or directed to carry their cattle directly to the market-hall, and not to sell them elsewhere on any account, under the penalty of having the cattle confiscated, and a fine of 200 francs. Butchers, under the same penalty, are prohibited from buying or giving earnest for cattle to the dealers in any other place than openly in the market. The dealers, on their arrival at the market, shall declare and register the number of heads of cattle they have to sell, and range them in stalls appropriated for the different kinds of cattle. Each dealer shall mark his own cattle, and, on no account, suffer them to be mixed with those of any other. Each shall remain with his stock, and not quit them before the sale and delivery. The markets to open and close, by sound of bell, on fixed hours. Before the hour of sale the inspector shall examine all cattle, to see whether they be fit for consumption. No cattle shall be sold before the opening, or after the close, of the markets, under the penalty of confiscation, and a fine of 50 marks on each of the offenders. The cattle not disposed of shall be kept in the cells of the market-place, and exposed to sale the next day, three hours before the opening of the market."

cannot remain a doubt) should be reduced to 60s. per quarter, in that case I should humbly submit that government should become purchasers of at least two million quarters of wheat, to be stored in public granaries or magazines, agreeably to the practice and custom of many European states, in order to meet future exigencies. By such a step no loss would be likely to ensue to government ultimately; but if any did accrue, it would certainly bear no proportion to the mischief of expatriating such immense sums, as we have been recently driven to, and which can in no way find their way back to this country.

The natural wants of agriculturists, and the constant demand on them for current cash, added to the operation of the excise system, will naturally compel them to send their remaining stock to market. But if government should, in the outset, be losers, by purchasing at a higher price than grain can be purchased for in succeeding years, the public would in fact receive an ample compensation by such subsequent reduction in the price of grain.

And, by way of elucidation, let us suppose that government should be compelled to purchase corn at even a higher average price than sixty shillings per quarter (exclusive of five shillings per quarter bounty),—for the first two million quarters of corn the aggregate would amount to six millions and a half, which, on a superficial view, may appear enormously adding to our existing burthens; but when it is considered that the two million quarters of corn in the hands of government would, in times of dearth, amply reimburse them, and, if a plentiful year succeeded, and it should be deemed necessary to sell the corn in their hands to prevent damage, it is impossible the loss could be equal to the extra expence every individual in the state incurs in the years of scarcity; and this is demonstrable, when we calculate the immense difference in the

recent prices of wheat, namely, from *forty-eight to one hundred and sixty-eight shillings* per quarter, making in the aggregate, according to the lowest estimate, upwards of *fifty millions sterling* additional expence to the public, exclusive of the immense drain of treasure exported for *foreign* supplies. The original expenditure, or rather advance of two or three millions by government, would occasion no ultimate loss to the nation, as they would, in the operation, be benefited in a two-fold degree, namely, in the first instance, by the happy reduction of the price of wheat; and secondly, by the money entering in this kingdom, which would be again diffused among the people. In a political sense, therefore, such a measure could, in no point of view, be considered as a national loss. The grand object is, how to obtain the required six millions and a half in a way less burthenfome to the people?—Of that I shall treat hereafter.

If the calculations of the ablest authors who have written on this important topic, and the very interesting researches of that noble and patriotic institution, the Agricultural Society, are accurate, I am warranted in asserting that two million quarters of wheat is equal to eight weeks' consumption or supply for England; estimating the consumption of wheat in England, in one year, at about twelve million quarters, (for I would rather take it at an *under rate* in order to form some probable *data*): but if the calculation should be found erroneous, it cannot materially affect the system I recommend, and it is indispensably necessary to adopt a given quantity, to enable me to ground my observations on a certain *basis*.

Let us take the population of England at ten millions, and suppose the average consumption of each individual to be somewhat more than nine bushels of wheat in a year; that will amount to, in making whole numbers, twelve

millions of quarters, or ninety-six millions of bushels, and allowing to each individual near twelve pounds of bread for his weekly consumption: the accelerated sale of *one-sixth* of the *entire quantity* therefore must, in its operation, *lower the markets immediately*; and the private wants of the farmer will naturally insure *subsequent supplies* from his remaining stock in hand, so that a constant reduction of price will be the ultimate and inevitable result of the measure.

The expence of management of the public granaries or magazines of corn, must, for a time, be supported by government; but the neighbouring magistrates, agreeably to the practice of other European states, should have the *controul* of the business; that is to say, the whole arrangement should be under the direction of five justices of the peace of the vicinity, three of whom to form a quorum, in order to give a legal sanction to their measures. These magistrates, aided by certain commissioners, to be nominated for that purpose from among the neighbouring independent freeholders, should be empowered, assisted by the corn-inspectors, to make the *purchases*; and the *payment* for such purchases, as well as the *bounty*, should be made, by *orders for payment* countersigned by the town-clerks or under-sheriffs of counties, upon the respective receivers-general of the counties, which *orders* should be made *payable to bearer*, in order that such cash orders might, for the convenience of farmers, be immediately negotiable; and the granaries should be under the seals of three of the five justices, the corn-inspectors, and four of the commissioners, who had duly qualified themselves to act in such cases by an oath, &c. and the *officers of the excise*, together with some of the magistrates, commissioners, and corn-inspectors, should, at stated periods, visit the public magazines or granaries of corn; and no sale of such

public grain should take place without a *special order* of the *Privy Council*, addressed to the magistrates, &c. for such purpose.

This mode of purchase and sale would prevent abuses, and is conformable to the practice established in all such states of Europe where corn is stored in the public granaries, which are always open to consumers, when the corn rises to a given price, in order to give an effectual check to private extortion.

The *cash orders* are certainly preferable to *debentures*, and would be found as convenient and current among the farmers as bank notes, and save considerable trouble to the feller *of* as well as those entitled to the bounty on corn, and likewise be a saving to government; nor can it be doubted but these *cash-orders* would float a long time in circulation as a very useful medium; which, at stated periods, might be exchanged by government for exchequer bills, on very eligible terms, and in a mode least burthensome to the public.

But if it should be deemed more advantageous for government to raise the sum of six millions and a half, in the manner of a contract or loan, upon the issue of six and a half millions in exchequer bills, then such bills so issued should be denominated the *Corn-Exchequer Bills*; and it is more than probable that such a measure would be only necessary the *first year*, at least to the *above extent*.

Objections may, however, be made to the system of bounties or premiums on production, from an apprehension of forcing improper grain upon the markets by a new incentive to avarice; but, to obviate this difficulty, care must be taken by the acting magistrates, &c. (several of whom are most certainly competent judges of what is proper well-threshed merchantable corn) that no orders for bounty issue, or any purchases be made, of improper or

unmerchantable grain; and they should be even armed with a power to punish any person bringing such for sale to any of the markets; and other useful regulations may be adopted to prevent frauds.

But even the measure of a bounty or premium on the first two million quarters of corn that shall be sold in the market, immediately after every harvest, will be found inefficient, unless an additional number of corn-mills are erected in all the market-towns. Such an additional number to be proportioned to their population; and these mills may be erected at the public expence, or by a voluntary subscription of the inhabitants, who will benefit, in a very high degree, by the general conveniences resulting from the erection of additional corn-mills in their own neighbourhood.

In all the fortified towns and cities on the continent, a number of wind-mills are erected on their walls or ramparts, which are either the property of the state, and retained to grind the corn from the public granaries, or let on lease by the magistrates to private millers: the former grind the grain belonging to the government, the latter grind the corn belonging to individuals, but both are worked for facilitating the necessary supplies for general consumption on the easiest terms, viz. about two per cent. upon an average, which is generally paid by the *poor* in *kind*, and in *cash* by the bakers. These are the customary tolls paid to millers in Holland, Germany, Denmark, Sweden, and Russia, and the taking a higher toll would subject the miller to severe penalties in those respective countries.

In towns or cities where there are no walls or ramparts; or where they are not of sufficient extent to allow the erection of wind-mills, water-mills are substituted, especially in countries intersected by a number of streams and

canals, which, in many parts of Germany, Denmark, and Sweden, and in nearly all the towns of Holland, run either through, or are contiguous to the towns and cities in those states; and streams, canals, and often rivers, facilitate the inland conveyance of grain on the easiest terms.

In our island we possess the advantage of erecting corn-mills, which may be worked by steam, on the most eligible terms; especially in the coal counties, where fuel may be obtained at a cheap rate; and our numerous canals are admirably calculated not only to save expence in the article of carriage, but for the more speedy conveyance of wheat and flour to the great corn-marts of the kingdom, imparting general advantages to tillage, infinitely superior to what many other parts of Europe can boast.

If therefore a number of additional corn-mills, to be worked by wind, water, or steam, were erected in the principal market-towns, particularly in those market-towns where the bounty would become payable, an immediate and efficient change would take place; for we cannot omit an observation (of which irrefragable proof has been adduced), namely, that the public have to contend with avarice from more than one quarter; and after Providence has blessed us with a most exuberant harvest, and even long after the *farmer* has *disposed* of his grain. If this should be the case, and indubitable testimony has left not a doubt of the existence of so serious an evil, we are driven to fix the delinquency on some or all of those classes, who enhance the price of grain in its *transit* from the *farmer* to the *consumer*.

When we reflect, therefore, how few there are who are proof against pecuniary temptations, it surely becomes a duty incumbent on our government to remove the possibility of extortion from the intermediate agents, who so greatly enhance the inceptive price of grain to the con-

sumers, without conferring any real advantages on *seven-eighths* of the original proprietors of that necessary and indispensable article of subsistence.

That *infrangible* class of men, the *millers*, possess an uncontrollable power over the markets under the present arrangement; and, where a power so unlimited exists, abuses too often prevail, especially when goaded by avarice to push for the goal, to which all ranks are so precipitately driving. That the public are injured by *some* of the members of this class is an incontrovertible truth. And what set of men possess such advantages as the millers, if they are disposed to avail themselves of their peculiar power over the markets? To what cause can the difference in the prices of wheat and flour be ascribed? Have the millers ever furnished the public with a fair criterion to lead their judgment on this inexplicable topic? If the operation is not grounded on manœuvre, let them assign the *true cause*. The public have long swallowed the nostrum; let them assist in analysing the ingredients of so destructive a composition!

We have indisputable authority for asserting that flagrant abuses exist in this quarter under the solemn sanction of an oath; for we need only advert to the deposition of a gentleman* every way competent to give a decided testimony on the subject, who, before the corn and flour committee nominated some few years since, deposed, "that flour might be sold at *eightpence* per sack lower than the average price of wheat (even allowing for the expence of carriage)," and adding, "that if corn was *ground on the spot*, the difference might be still greater;" and it must be observed that this gentleman's testimony was the result of sixteen years' experience, founded on very accurate data. And he further deposed, "that dur-

* Mr. S. Wyatt.

“ing the severe frost in the year 1789 the Albion Mills actually supplied the public with flour at the rate of seven shillings and eightpence per sack under the then average price of wheat.”

Another gentleman of equal respectability and veracity, before the same committee, demonstrated that a few opulent individuals have the entire guidance or controul of the markets, and make what returns they please to the meal-weighers; and this evidence was confirmed by the production of well-authenticated documents equally strong and conclusive. From these premises, we may fairly conclude that the public are either prejudiced by the millers, or that there are not a sufficient number of corn-mills necessary to answer the uniform and constant demand of an increasing population.

Our deficiency in corn-mills must, therefore, excite the greatest surprize, especially as the advantages of erecting an additional number, in the vicinity of the canals, are so obvious; a measure that would tend greatly to enhance the value of canal shares, and, in a most eminent degree, promote the public welfare; as, in addition to the facilitating supplies, the most salutary consequences would ensue from their being subjected to the visits of the excise-officers, as the people, in consequence of such visits, would be guarded against the danger of feeding on unwholesome and pernicious mixtures, which are too often ground up with the corn to increase the profits of a rapacious miller.

I shall not, in this paper, treat on the prices of other species of provisions, for the obvious reason that the regulations, which may be adopted for the more regular and reasonable supplies of wheat and flour, may hereafter, with equal facility, be extended to procure every other article of subsistence on the most advantageous terms to the consumers.

But it is certainly necessary to make some observations on the immense number of acres of excellent land now suffered to lie waste in the very heart of a great and opulent kingdom. Why this apathy has so long prevailed, or rather why the obvious necessity of availing ourselves of so capital a resource, has not urged an earlier resort to so certain an expedient for procuring additional supplies, excites the greatest surprize? But I apprehend the true reason that can be assigned for so otherwise unpardonable a negligence is, that a general plan of enclosure might, like many other salutary projects, degenerate into a mere job, and, perhaps, only open a more extensive field for depredation; as all combinations of private persons, whether formed by a greater or a lesser number, for good or for evil purposes, have pernicious tendencies, and ultimately operate (though under a different denomination) as monopoly, either directly or relatively; and as all combinations may be converted to mischievous purposes, whenever sight is lost of the original motives which influenced their formation, they ought not only to be carefully avoided, but absolutely discouraged.

In so momentous a concern as the bringing seven or eight millions of acres of waste land into a state of production, the interference of government is obvious; *private* emolument and *public* advantage are not always compatible; the *former* may be attendant *on*, but seldom *generates* the *latter*. A great state should not delegate to *private* operations *public* measures, which may be converted to individual aggrandisement, when *general utility alone* should be the ostensible and primary object.

The waste lands in this kingdom would of themselves form a splendid principality, if properly cultivated and brought to the productive state they are capable of arriving at; nature, seconded by art, would in a few years

evince a fertility equal to the rest of the island: nothing but labour and means are wanting to attain that desirable end; and for its attainment, in the highest perfection, government should step forward, and, with a fostering hand, lead to the accomplishment of so meritorious a measure. As enclosure alone, without an additional stock, will operate partially; whereas if government were, either in conjunction with the proprietors, or by purchasing such wastes in fee (where it might be practicable), to take them in their own hands, and apportion out the wastes in moderate sized farms, it would become a resource to the nation of inestimable value, as well as a source of useful and productive labour, equal to fifty millions, and give employ to a million of souls that are at present precluded from honest means of exerting themselves, because they have no prospect of their industry meeting its due reward.

If government, in adopting such a measure, should make an arrangement to give employment to so useful a body of men as agriculturists, and even advance sums of *four or five hundred pounds*, in the nature of the exchequer loans formerly made to the mercantile body (only extending the times of payment to a longer period, or stipulate to receive merchantable grain at the fair market price, at a given period, in exoneration), in order to enable competent persons to fit out such farms, it would ultimately promote an additional produce of more than two million quarters of grain, exclusive of other articles of subsistence.

And, on the conclusion of peace, such a system might furnish employment for some thousands of those noble fellows that have so gallantly fought our battles in every quarter of the globe, who, for want of an honest avocation on shore, are often driven into foreign service; and some of the most valuable petty officers; as well as those

in a more superior sphere, often degraded before the mast, or obliged to embrace subordinate stations in the merchants' service, to procure bread for their wives and children.—If ever any set of men had a claim on their country for superior attention, this is the class. When the legions of Rome had fought the battles, and bled and conquered for the state, they returned not only to share their country's applause, but its produce: the *Io* triumph was grateful to the ear, but an exuberant soil (a part of which was their own) enabled them to relish those songs of triumph!—But how different, alas! are our modern heroes treated! With aching eye, and palpitating heart, have I often beheld a brave youth, who, with wounded bosom, and mutilated body, has been doomed to expect *that* charity from the transient passenger which *his* innate modesty forbade him to *ask*!—But I will not dwell on so miserable a picture: the digression was extorted by my feelings, on recollecting the different spectacles our streets too often exhibit of the nature I have depicted.

It is true, neither seamen nor soldiers are much addicted to agriculture; but how many petty officers, and subaltern gentlemen, would prefer being placed in such eligible farms to the scanty pittance of a half-pay allowance; and especially those who are too proud to beg, and too honest to steal; and yet must, when their ships are paid off, or their regiments reduced, be driven to the one or other alternative, or doomed to behold their infant progeny writhing in the pangs of complicated misery for want of healthy and sufficient nutriment. How could the wealth of the state be better laid out than in making a comfortable provision for such men, and their well-educated families; and, by so salutary an arrangement, accomplish, in one and the same operation, the gratitude and improvement of Great Britain?

And how many worthy persons are there of other descriptions, in every part of the kingdom, who would gladly avail themselves of such means to establish themselves in rural comfort, who are perfectly competent to such undertakings? Let Great Britain set the noble example of *colonising* (if I may be allowed the expression) her *interior wastes*; a comparatively trifling expence in the outset will effect all the purposes of increased cultivation, which will carry with it all the other advantages of political oeconomy. Extended empire has a sonorous sound, only adapted to the ears of ambitious men; but a compact, well cultivated, populous state, rejoices the heart of the benevolent one. In this favoured isle the *first man* in it is more emulous of the chief rank among the *latter*, than the *former* description of human beings.

If immensity of territorial dominion denoted the power of a state, what ideas of terror would be excited on viewing the *Russian* and *British* empires on the same map? and what admiration must the *superior power* of the *lesser state* excite in the beholder? But to its compactness, rather than its extent, is that wonderful difference to be ascribed; and, when our cultivation is improved to the highest pitch of which it is capable, Britain must become as invulnerable and opulent as wise laws and beneficent systems can possibly render a country!

Before I dismiss this subject, however, I must beg leave to treat of the great utility and advantage of boat-fisheries, a resource well worth the attention of government! When the convenience of our coast, creeks, bays, and rivers are adverted to, the scarcity and high price of fish excites no small degree of surprize; and when we consider the excellence and nutritious quality of the myriads of fish found on our coasts, and in our rivers, the wonder is considerably increased;—but in this article, en-

grossers, &c. are found, as well as in those already enumerated. The scarcity is in a great measure imputable to the want of a greater number of boats, and men properly qualified for coast and river fishing. It becomes an important object; therefore, to give employment to an additional number of boats and men, for the more plentiful supply of the markets with fish.

To remedy the present defect, government should grant a bounty to a certain number of boat-owners, who shall employ the greatest number of boats, for coast or river fishing; and to such boatmen as shall land the greatest quantity of fresh fish for consumption. Such a bounty would immediately operate as a stimulus on hundreds, perhaps thousands, of well-qualified fishermen, and would also become a powerful incentive to a vast number of other persons to engage in the fisheries. Nor should government stop here;—boats properly fitted out, and all the requisite tackle for fishing in all situations, with the various apparatus necessary to ensure success, should be either lent, or sold on the easiest terms, to responsible persons, or such as could procure sufficient sureties for the payment or return of such boats; and the payment or hire of such boats should be made at stated and convenient periods. The hire, or price of hire, of the boats should in some measure be regulated by the quantum or quality of the fish caught by the hirer. A number of able and industrious men would certainly avail themselves of such eligible means of earning a subsistence, who have not means to procure a boat and the proper implements for fishing; and when a peace happily takes place, many a brave seaman, who may be averse to husbandry, would gladly embrace means of earning a comfortable livelihood on their own element on the terms to which I have alluded.

The expending a few thousand pounds in order to fit out an additional number of boats to obtain such an auxiliary in the article of subsistence, and to defray the expense of a bounty equivalent to their success, would, in my humble opinion, become a very salutary measure, as it would, in the first instance, give employment to a great number of industrious men, who have not sufficient means to engage in a line attended with an expense in the outfit not within their competence, and when it may be apprehended that the commodity would not for some time repay the cost of outfit, and yet afford a reasonable profit to enable the fishermen to maintain their families. Secondly, it would lessen the consumption of other articles of subsistence, and consequently lower their price, by the occasional substitution of an article of food equally palatable and wholesome. And, lastly, it would train up an additional number of useful hands for the sea-service, to answer future exigencies; for persons engaged even in river-fishing soon become expert sailors. It may be fairly concluded, therefore, that if such a bounty did not increase national opulence, it would certainly tend to augment the number of that description of persons on whom its defence so materially and essentially depends. It would likewise greatly alleviate the distresses of the poor, who would be enabled to accomplish the purchase of a nutritious meal of fish for a few pence, when they could not procure an equal weight in flesh for as many shillings.

Nor is such a measure new in principle; for the tonnage-bounties on the whale and white-herring fisheries were founded on this policy. It was supposed, the bounty in those cases tended directly to render the articles cheaper than they could otherwise be, and enable the adventurers to engage in those concerns under more favourable terms,

and that the bounty would place them on a more equal footing with the Dutch and other nations, then most profitably engaged in those fisheries, who, for various reasons, were enabled to conduct them on terms of greater advantage than we possibly could without the aid of such a bounty. Thus a part of our capital was usefully employed in bringing commodities to market, of which the price, without such aid, would never have repaid the cost and the necessary or ordinary profits of stock.

It must nevertheless be confessed, that this excellent measure, like many others, was greatly abused, particularly in the herring-buss fishery, and an immense sum from private contributors wholly sunk in consequence. How this extraordinary failure ensued is very difficult to account for, nor is it my purpose to make any inquiry into the matter; I only take leave to state the principle, which was certainly excellent, but failed producing those beneficial effects it was so well calculated to ensure, not from *natural* but *latent* causes. Those who supported so noble and patriotic a measure were certainly entitled to our highest applause; while those who perverted it to the vilest purposes of rapacity and private extortion merit execration: and perhaps, after all, advantage was taken of the bounty being rather proportioned to the burthen of the vessel than her diligence and success in the fishery, and thereby throwing a temptation in the way of the owners to fit out vessels for catching the *bounty* rather than the *fish*; for otherwise it would be impossible to account for our indifferent success in those fisheries, especially when we advert to the immense advantages which the Hanseatic League, the Flemings, the Swedes, Danes, Dutch, and even our own ancestors, derived from that inexhaustible source of wealth, not only on our own coasts, in the Baltic, and

North Seas, but even on the coasts of Iceland: our failure being the more extraordinary, as engagements in extensive fisheries are peculiarly adapted to the genius of a great maritime state.

But in allowing bounties on boats employed in coast and river fishing, abuses may be guarded against, by making the bounty wholly depend on the diligence and success of their managers rather than the size or outfits of the craft employed. Our own subjects may be as usefully and profitably employed by this means as those of other states; and then we should not be driven to import Swedish herrings, when, under proper encouragement, thousands might be usefully employed in that profitable and most useful occupation on our own coasts. To give strength to my remarks, I will once more quote Dr. A. Smith, and give his own emphatical words on this important subject:—"A boat-fishery seems to be the mode of fishing best adapted to the peculiar situation of Scotland, the fishers carrying the herrings on shore as fast as they are taken, to be either cured or consumed fresh. But the great encouragement which a bounty of thirty shillings the ton gives to the bus-fishery is necessarily a discouragement to the boat-fishery, which, having no such bounty, cannot bring its cured fish to market upon the same terms as the bus-fishery. The boat-fishery, accordingly, which, before the establishment of the bus-bounty, was very considerable, and is said to have employed a number of seamen not inferior to what the bus-fishery employs at present, is now gone almost entirely to decay in many parts of Scotland. During certain seasons of the year, herrings make no inconsiderable part of the food of the common people. A bounty which tended to lower their price in the home market might contribute a good deal to the re-

lief of a great number of our fellow-subjects, whose circumstances are by no means affluent."

This argument applies as well to the whole island as to Scotland, and may extend to every species of fish in their proper seasons, either in the sea or in rivers; and the payment of these bounties may be made in like manner as the bounty payable on the corn, and the whole business placed in a similar way under the controul of the magistrates in the several vicinities to which the fish entitled to such bounty may be brought for sale. Or if it should be deemed too minute and troublesome to the country magistrates, who reside at a distance from the smaller towns to which fish may be brought for sale, some of the subordinate members of the civil establishment may have the superintendance of the business, subject to the controul of the neighbouring magistrates, who should be authorized, at stated periods, to inquire into their operations, and confirm or annul them.

And if the corporation of the city of London, who have on all occasions taken the lead where true patriotism and genuine benevolence called for their civic exertions, were to adopt this eligible plan (if government should decline an immediate interference), and fit out a number of boats with the requisite apparatus, in order to procure a constant and plentiful supply for the metropolis on the terms I have presumed to recommend, it would certainly throw an additional lustre on the noblest city of the globe, and might stimulate other towns and cities to follow so beneficial an example! Perhaps many a fellow-creature, anxious to procure honest means of subsistence, but unable, for want of means, to accomplish their good intentions, might, in consequence of the adoption of this measure, be snatched from inevitable ruin.

If it should be founded in solemn truth that the pro-

duction of our soil is really inadequate to its population; the plans I have ventured to propose may merit serious consideration: but if, after all that has been said and written; sanctioned by authorities that on every occasion merit unquestionable credit, it should be found that the scarcity is *facilitious*; it becomes an object of the highest consequence to the state to adopt an efficient system for supplying the people with the articles of *prime necessity* on terms that may place them within their grasp. Let government fully investigate the cause and develop the mystery of the dearth; for mystery certainly exists in some quarter: perhaps the *Batavian policy*, in the article of their spices, may have furnished *British avarice* with a detestable precedent!

I shall now proceed to an historical deduction of the various prices of corn and other articles of sustenance from the Norman conquest to the present æra; to which I shall add a summary account of the several statutes enacted during all that period for regulating the prices and supplies of the different species of provisions; and also to restrain and punish engrossing, forestalling, regrating, and monopoly, as well those that have been since repealed as such as are still in force;—in the course of which I have interspersed some remarks on the difference in the articles of living from the above period to the present time, by which, as well as the maxims of our ancestors, and the remedies they adopted in the times of dearth, some advantages may be deduced.

I shall only observe that this part of my work is compiled from the most authentic public records and the ablest writers on the subject, and the authorities are all stated from whence my information is derived; to all which I have added some curious facts, that may tend to show the prodigious increase in the

TRADE, CULTIVATION,
AND
GENERAL IMPROVEMENTS,
OF
GREAT BRITAIN.

THIS is the first authentic account we have of the dearth of corn since the Norman conquest, and mention hereof is made by bishop Fleetwood in his *Chronicon Preciosum*, who states that wheat then sold for 6s. per quarter, which was certainly a prodigious price, when we consider that the usual price of corn had theretofore been 2s. a quarter, *i. e.* 6s. of our present money, while 6s. per quarter was, of course, equal to 18s. of our money; and, if we consider that the rate of living was then in the proportion of seven to one cheaper than in our days, the price will be found equivalent to 126s. per quarter, a prodigious price in those days. But the first famous and eminent statute made for remedy was not until the 5th Henry III. intituled *Affiza Panis et Cerevisie*, *i. e.* affize of bread and beer, by which, in a great measure, may be understood the rate of living then.

It is presumed, Henry I. in 1135, on this account brought the tenants of his demesne lands to pay him part of his rents in money instead of payment in kind, as was the custom at that period in most parts of Europe.

Corn was in this year so scarce in England, says bishop Fleetwood in his *Chronicon Preciosum*, that a quarter of wheat was sold for 18s. 8d. *i. e.* 2l. 16s. of our money, partly proceeding from unkind seasons, but probably pro-

A. D. 1125.

1135.

1197.

A. D. ceeding more from the improvident and ignorant management of the farmers and the knavery of the corn-jobbers.

1202 Wheat, on account of rains and subsequent frost, became so dear as 12s. the quarter, or 1l. 16s. of our money, which is equal to 9l. a quarter, compared to the value of living, or what 36s. would produce at the present rate of living, being five times to one, compared with those days.

1223 King John was the first that established rates of provision. Wheat was 1s. 6d. or 4s. 6d. of our money, per quarter. Wheat rose to 12s. or 36s. of our money, per quarter.

1237 { Wheat was at 3s. 4d. } per quarter this year.
Barley, 2s.
Oats, 1s.

Which was three times the value of our money;

Viz. 10s. } Of our money, and at five times the rate
6s. } of living would be equivalent to
3s. }

50s. } per quarter in these times.
30s. }
15s. }

1243-4. Corn was so plentiful, that wheat and peas were sold at 2s. per quarter, or 6s. of our money; but in 1246 was so dear as to be at 16s. equal to 58s. of our money, and, at our rate of living, equivalent to 14l. 10s. per quarter.

1256. Wheat was now at the enormous price of 24s. equal to 72s. of our money. This bishop Fleetwood attributes to great negligence in the government of those times; and if we compare that price to our present rate of living, it must, at five times cheaper, have been equivalent to 18l. per quarter in these times; but if we reckon, as many

authors of great veracity do, the rate of living at seven times cheaper, it will be at the enormous rate of 25l. 4s. per quarter. A. D.

Statute 51st Henry III. after preamble, recites—“That he had seen certain ordinances of his progenitors, kings of England, in these words; viz. ‘When a quarter of wheat is sold for 12d. then wastel bread of a farthing should weigh 6l. 16s. i. e. 6lbs. 9 oz. 12 dwts. according to troy-weight.’ Then the statute goes on to enact, ‘That bread cocket of the same corn shall weigh more than wastel, and bread made into simnel shall weigh less than wastel,’ &c. (of no use now to repeal, because out of practice). Wastel was a fine sort of flour; yet simnel seems to have been finer than wastel: from which name of simnel the cakes still made in some counties took their name. And the statute further adds thus: ‘That when a baker in every quarter of wheat (as it is proved by the king’s baker) may gain 4d. and the bran and two loaves for advantage, or, over and above, for three servants 1½d. for two lads ½d. for salt 1d. for kneading ½d. for candle ¼d. for wood 2d.—in all (says the statute) 12¾d. or 3s. and 2¼d. of modern money, may be sufficient;”—yet, by the book of assize now in use, published by proclamation towards the latter end of Queen Elizabeth’s reign, bakers in corporation towns, in regard they paid scot and lot, are allowed 6s. in every quarter of middle-priced wheat for their charge in baking; but country bakers only 4s.; so that when the middle-priced wheat is 30s. the quarter, you are to add 6s. for the assize of town bakers, and then look into the table of assize for 36s. in which case the penny-loaf ought to weigh 9 oz. 8 dwts.

The above statute proceeds: “When a quarter of wheat is sold for 3s. or 3s. 4d. (10s. of our money), a quarter of barley for 20d. or 2s. and a quarter of oats

A. D. "for 16d. then brewers in cities ought and may well afford to sell two gallons of beer or ale for 1d. and out of cities three or four gallons for a penny." So that a gallon of ale was sold for 1½d. of our money in cities, which, if as strong as our modern common brewers' beer, which now sells at 10d. per gallon, makes the difference of 8½d. per gallon, or in the proportion of 6½ to one in living, or all other things being supposed to be proportionably cheap. In prices, the necessaries of life are six or seven times as dear now as they were in king Henry III's time; yet in all probability, in years of great plenty, the difference of living then and now might be as ten is to one. This statute concludes thus: "We have caused, at the request of the bakers of our town of Coventry, that the ordinances aforesaid, by tenor of these presents, shall be exemplified;" which shows that Coventry was a place of consideration then, as indeed it had been long before the Norman conquest, having been the usual residence of the kings and afterwards dukes of Mercia. Wheat, according to Chronicon Preciosum, was now

1270. so exceedingly dear as 4l. 16s. per quarter, or 14l. 8s. of our money, a monstrous price, if the bishop's authorities may be depended on; nay, he says, it was some time in this year 6l. 8s. or 19l. 4s. * of our money the quarter: so great, says the bishop, was the famine of this year, that wheat sold for 2l. 8s. per bushel, or 19l. 4s. per quarter, which, at six times cheaper than the rate of living now, would be equal to 115l. 4s. !!! The calamity was so great, that almost all the silver in the kingdom was melted to purchase foreign corn.

1286. By the Chronicon Preciosum, wheat was now so cheap as 2s. 8d. per quarter, or 8s. of our money, the rate of

* It must be observed that this merely relates to the difference of living then and now, which was, on an average, six times cheaper than at present.

living being five times as cheap as in our times; and the same year was again so dear as 16s. (or 48s. per quarter of our money). The bishop, with seeming reason, ascribes such great and sudden alterations in the price of corn more to the want of skill and diligence in the farmers than to the inclemency of the heavens, and proceeds in his remark thus: "Possibly, too, there might even in those times have been knavish tricks practised in this business for private gain; and moreover it is much to be questioned whether the government was sufficiently diligent to prevent such sudden variations; all which considerations make it difficult to form an exact computation of the expence of living then compared to our own times."

According to the Chronicon Preciosum, wheat was 1299. sold this year for 20d. the quarter, and, in some parts of England, at 6d. per quarter, and which prices were at this time set by the Common Council of London!

Proportion of living then to now, six to one at least.

Windmills were invented about this time.

By the Chronicon Preciosum it appears, wheat was at 1309. 7s. 2d. malt 6s. oats 4s. per quarter.

The English parliament having petitioned king Edward II, and his council, in relation to the intolerable dearness of provision, it was thereupon enacted, "That the best ox not fed with grain should be sold for 16s. and no more, and if fed with corn for 24s. at most; the best fat cow for 12s.; a fat hog of two years old for 3s. 4d.; a fat wether unshorn for 20d. if shorn 14d.; a fat goose for 2½d. a capon 2d. a fat hen 1d. and 24 eggs for 1d. two chickens for 1d. four pigeons 1d.; and those who would not sell them at these rates should forfeit them to the king." Although we may here observe some difference between the values put on some kind of provision then

A. D. and in our days, yet, upon an average, the difference of living then and now seems to be nearly five, or as six, is to one, always remembering that their money contained thrice as much silver as our money or coin of the same denomination does:—thus, for example, if a goose then cost $2\frac{1}{2}d.$ i. e. $7\frac{1}{2}d.$ of our money, according to the proportion of six to one it would cost $3s. 9d.$

1315. The Chronicon Preciosum in this year gives us the very high price of provisions, viz. By great rains wheat rose to $40s.$ per quarter, or $6l.$ of our money; peas and beans to $1l.$; malt to $13s. 4d.$ and good ale rose to $2d. 3d.$ and $4d.$ per gallon, or $1s.$ of modern money.

1317. In this year, the Chronicon Preciosum, according to Stowe, makes the price of wheat so high as $80s.$ per quarter, or $12l.$ of our money; yet a very early and good harvest brought it down to $6s. 8d.$ per quarter.

1327. In this year, being the first of Edward III. according to the Chronicon Preciosum, upon an inquisition at Tunbridge in Kent, a capital messuage, with 70 acres of arable land, was worth no more than $35s.$ per annum; twelve hens fold for $1s. 6d.$ a cock and thirteen hens for $1s. 7d.$ If wheat was proportionably cheap, then the rate or expence of living at this time must have been five or six times as cheap as in our days! Eighty acres of arable land was worth $20s.$ per annum, or $3l.$ of our modern money; that is, $3d.$ (which is $9d.$ of our modern money) per acre; meadow land was at $4d.$ and pasture at a $1d.$ per acre.

This account is corroborated by what James Howell, in his Londinopolis, says he had read, but does not quote the author, That in the first year of Edward III. in the year 1327, John of Oxford, a vintner of London, and afterwards lord-mayor, gave to the priory of the Holy Trinity in London two tofts of land, one mill, fifty acres

of wood, with the appurtenances, in Kentish Town, in A. D. value $20s. 3d.$ by the year, or about $3l. os. 9d.$ yearly of our money.

Mr. Madox, in his Firma Burgi, observes, that in the first year of King Edward III. fundry incorporated trades were then existing in the city of London, as the taylors, armourers, skimmers, goldsmiths, &c.; and various succeeding trades were incorporated in 1345, &c.

Southwark was an asylum for rogues and bankrupts till 1327, when the balliwick of Southwark was granted by the crown to the city of London.

Sir ROBERT COTTON'S Records, p. 21.

1329. "Sundry merchants of Lynn and Barton-upon-Humber do undertake, at a certain price, to deliver 10,000 quarters of all sorts of grain at the town of Berwick and in the road to Leith; the wheat and malt at $9s.$ (this was dear, but freight and carriage must have been included), oats, beans, and peas, at $5s.$ per quarter, money then being three to one of our money."

1336. Bishop Fleetwood, in his Chronicon Preciosum, observes, that under this year corn was so plentiful, and money so scarce, that at London wheat was sold at $2s.$ per quarter, an ox at $6s. 8d.$ a fat sheep at $8d.$ a fat goose at $2d.$ a pig at $1d.$ and six pigeons for $1d.$ which cheapness, according to Knighton and Fabian, was occasioned by King Edward III. gathering up all the money he could get for carrying on his wars with France and Scotland, so that this could not be a permanent rule of expence of living for the future.

1339. The bishop of Ely's Chronicon Preciosum, from Sir Robert Cotton's Abridgment of the Records, relate, that several merchants undertook, in the year 1339, to deliver Berwick and Leith 10,000 quarters of wheat and

A. D. malt, at 9s. per quarter, which was called a high price— still remembering that 9s. contained as much silver as 27s. of our money.

The Chronicon Preciosum relates that workmen took their wages in wheat at 10d. per bushel (i. e. as much as 2s. 6d.); larders or weeders and haymakers were paid 1d. per day, reapers of corn 2d. or 3d. per day, and their servants 1½d. per day.

1361. According to the Chronicon Preciosum, wheat was this year at 2s. the quarter, though it was two years before 26s. 8d. per quarter; two hens were sold for 1d. and one hog for 1s. 6d.—money still three to one.

1378. By the Chronicon Preciosum, it appears that wheat was now 4s. per quarter, or 10s. of our money, white wine at 6d. and red port at 4d. per gallon—living then four times cheaper than in our times.

1391. According to Knighton's Chronicle, a great dearth of corn and provision happening this year, the mayor took 2000 marks out of the orphan's fund for purchasing of corn from beyond sea for the benefit of the poor. Wheat being then at 16s. 8d. the quarter, equal to 5l. of our money; and to that sum twenty-four aldermen added each 20l. (equal to 50l. now) for the same charitable purpose.

1416. Corn, according to Stowe's Survey of London, was this year so dear as to be sold for 16s. per quarter, or about 38s. of our money*.

1434. The Chronicon Preciosum observes, that in this year England had a very wet autumn, and wheat was dear for the two succeeding years, viz. at 26s. 8d. per quarter, or 2l. 13s. 4d.; yet, towards the close of the year following, it fell again to 5s. 4d. per quarter, or 10s. 8d. of our money, which seems to have been near the usual moderate or mean

* Probably occasioned by Henry V.'s expedition to France.

price of a quarter of wheat, about that time, in favourable years;—wine being now at 12d. (or 2s. of our money per gallon): so the rate of living was still about four times as cheap as in our days.

By statute 15th Henry VI. cap. 2. it is recited, "That corn being of small price, that is, wheat at 6s. 8d. and barley at 3s. 4d. per quarter, they may be carried forth out of the realm without licence;" viz.

6s. 8d. i. e. 13s. 4d. of our present coin, per quarter.
3s. 4d. — 6s. 8d. ditto.

Value of money twice as much as our's, and living four times cheaper.

Henry VI. writes to Eric X. king of Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, "That although England usually produces plenty of corn, yet, by reason of a rainy season, corn, and more especially rye, had this year failed in most parts of it, wherefore he requests Eric to permit a merchant of York (therein named) to supply himself with what corn he may desire to purchase, hearing that there is plenty thereof in his dominions."

The coins were not made equal to our present standard of money till the reign of Edward VI.

The Chronicon Preciosum gives the price of provisions for this year—Wheat 4s. 4d. or 8s. 8d. per quarter of our money; a fat ox at 31s. 8d. or 3l. 3s. 4d.; a hog at 3s. or 6s. of our money; pigeons 4d. per dozen, which would

be equal to wheat 43s. 4d. per quarter	
A fat ox 15l. 8s.	} now.
A hog 1l. 10s.	
A goose 2s. 6d.	
Twelve pigeons 3s. 4d.	

It was that same year enacted by parliament, that, when wheat was so cheap as 6s. 8d. per quarter, rye 4s.

A. D. barley 3s. those three species of corn might be exported without a licence.

In 1445, Wheat as above.
Ale $1\frac{1}{2}d.$ per gallon.
Hay 3s. 6d. per load.
A young swan 3s.
A goose 3d.
100 stock fish 7s. 6d.
3000 red herrings for 31s.
Bullocks and heifers at 5s. each.

These last were probably only calves.

1446. Sir Robert Cotton's Abridgment of the Records states, that in the 23d year of Henry VI. 5000*l.* was granted by parliament for relief of the decayed towns.

☞ The stone edifice (still partly standing) called Leadenhall, was first erected for a public granary.

The Chronicon Preciosum says, a bailiff of husbandry in England, at this time, had a yearly salary (besides his diet) of 23s. 4d. and 5s. for his clothing yearly; a common servant in husbandry had 15s.; the chief carter and chief shepherd 20s. with their diet, and 4s. each for clothing; a woman servant 10s. with diet, and for clothing 4s.; a free-mason or master-carpenter had 4d. per day and his diet, and without diet $5\frac{1}{2}d.$; a master-tiler, flater, rough-mason, &c. with diet, 3d. without diet $4\frac{1}{2}d.$ or 9d. of our money; a woman labourer $2\frac{1}{2}d.$ and diet, and without diet $4\frac{1}{2}d.$ Money being then twice the value of our present money, the master-tilers, flaters, and rough-masons, had what would be equal to 1s. $10\frac{1}{2}d.$ per day of our money, and the women labourers nearly the same; so that the expence of living now is near five times as much as it was at that time.

From the year 1450 to 1460, says Bishop Fleetwood, in his Chronicon Preciosum, wheat was never above 8s. per quarter, and in the year 1455 it was so very cheap as 1s. per quarter—Stowe says 14d. per quarter, and malt 17d. notwithstanding the sword was drawn between the houses of York and Lancaster (which usually cuts down corn as well as men), and ale was per gallon 1d. to $1\frac{1}{2}d.$: but from these surprisngly cheap prices no certain rule can be determined concerning the rate of living.

By statute 3d of Edward IV. c. 2. it was enacted, That 1462. when the quarter of wheat did not exceed the price of 6s. 8d. rye 4s. barley 3s. no person should import any of the three kinds of grain, upon forfeiture thereof.

This act was made in consequence of the German merchants of the Steel-yard having imported large quantities of corn when that of England was at a low price, which excited great complaints among the farmers, and the landed interest suffered not a little from such a circumstance. But when the rates of corn in succeeding times became much higher, this statute was repealed in the 21st of James I.

In the 11th volume of Rymer's Fœdera we have a remarkable instance of the cheapness of living in these times.—King Edward IV. grants to the lady Margaret his sister (afterwards duchess of Burgundy) an annual allowance of 400 marks, for her clothes and the other necessaries of her body, suitable to the dignity of our kingdom, ourself, and her—for wages and other expences for servants attending her; which annual allowance she shall enjoy until we can provide for her properly by a suitable marriage. This being double the value of our money, or 800 marks, and living being $4\frac{1}{2}$ cheaper than in our

A. D. days, it was equivalent to 2000 marks, or 1333*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.* sterling, a striking contrast to the expence of modern times!

1466. In the same year, wheat, by Sir Robert Cotton's Records, was 6*s.* 8*d.* per quarter of eight bushels, which was considered as the medium price between very cheap and very dear. Living was then 2½ cheaper than in our days, and the corn double in value; therefore it is equal to 33*s.* 4*d.* per quarter, according to the present rate of living.

1470. In Rymer's *Fœdera*, vol. XI. p. 654, under the year 1470, there is a rescript of king Edward IV. to Edward Dudley, his lieutenant of Ireland, declaring "that who-
"soever shall seize on and bring him George duke of
"Clarence, and Richard earl of Warwick, shall for his
"reward have either 100*l.* per annum in lands, or else
"1000*l.* in money, at his option." From which may fairly be inferred, that the then current value of land in England was ten years' purchase.

In vol. XI. p. 712, of the *Fœdera*, there is an account of maintaining the unfortunate Henry VI. in the tower, with the allowance of ten persons in waiting on him for fourteen days, being in the whole but 4*l.* 5*s.* (which is not quite 8*s.* per day) for the king and his ten attendants: and, in the same record, the king's own diet for two days in the tower cost but 3*s.* 10*d.* or 1*s.* 11*d.* per day.

1482. Anderfon's *Origin of Commerce* states, that the fishing of England for exportation must have been considerable at this time, since, in the 22d year of king Edward IV, we find no less than four statutes (though two of them are left out of our statute-book) for the well-packing casks of salmon, herrings, eels, and other barreled fish; yet there are several older statutes for the preservation of the fry of salmon, lampreys; and even as far

back as Edward the Ist's time, especially in the rivers Thames and Medway; but they related only to our home consumption.

Beer was now brewed, the Flemings having found out the virtue of hops in this century, which was before considered as a useless weed; though it seems to have been discovered in Scotland somewhat earlier.

1482.

A proclamation in this year, by Richard III. offering a reward of 1000*l.* sterling, or 100*l.* per annum, for the apprehension of the duke of Buckingham. Another striking proof of the value of land being still only ten years' purchase; and especially as 1000 marks, or 100 marks annually, are offered by the tyrant, in another proclamation, for delivering up to him the marquis of Dorset, the bishop of Ely and Salisbury.

1483.

According to the *Chronicon Preciosum*, wheat was this year so high as 24*s.* per quarter, which, by the then reduced value of money, was equal to 36*s.* per quarter; and living being still twice and a half cheaper than in our days, made it equal to 5*l.* per quarter.

1486.

Lord Verulam, in his *Life of Henry VII.* observes that inclosures became more frequent in England, whereby quantities of arable land, which could not be manured without much people and families, were turned into pasture, being thereby easily managed by a few herdsmen; and tenancies for years, lives, and at will, whereon much of the yeomanry lived, were turned into demefne. This bred a decay of the people, and by consequence of towns, churches, tithes, &c. and also a diminution of subsidies and taxes—wherefore an act of parliament was, in this fourth year of Henry VII. made, c. 19. That all houses of husbandry, that were used with twenty acres of ground and upwards, should be maintained and kept up for ever, with

A. D. a competent proportion of land to be *used and occupied* by them.

I take the words to be *used and occupied* to couple *tillage* with *residence*, and compel proprietors of land to adapt a portion of their estates and farms for cultivating wheat, &c.

☞ *Would not some similar statute in our days (viz. to compel all owners and occupiers of land to keep a certain portion in a state of cultivation for growing grain, &c. and prevent laying down so much land into grass farms) operate favourably.*

1492. In vol. XII. of the *Fœdera*, p. 471, is a licence from Henry VII. to a Fleming (therein named) to export fifty tons of ale, called beer (*quinquaginta dolia cerevisiæ vocatæ bere*); and in the same year we find one of the king's attendants into France was Petrus Vaneck, a brewer of Greenwich; both of which show, as well as what I have already noticed, that beer was brewed before the reign of Henry VIII. contrary to the received opinion: the price did not then exceed 2*d.* per gallon.

In this same year the king made the law for regulating weights and measures, which remains in force to this day: and, among those regulations, it was fixed, "that a quarter of corn should consist of eight bushels, to be raised and stricken."

And, by a statute of the 12th of that king, cap. 5. a bushel was directed to contain eight gallons, and every such gallon to weigh 8lbs. troy weight, and every such pound, *i. e.* troy weight, to contain 12 ounces, and every such ounce to weigh 20 sterlings, or 20 penny-weights, and every sterling or penny-weight to weigh 32 grains, of wheat taken from the middle of the year.

Bishop Fleetwood observes, in his *Chronicon Pre-*

ciosum, that there was a good law of king Edgar, that there should be the same money, the same weight, and the same measures, throughout the kingdom, but it was never well observed. The bishop goes on to observe, What can be more vexatious, both to men of reading and practice, than to find, that when we go out of one county into another, they must learn a new language, or cannot buy or sell any thing?—an acre is not an acre, nor a bushel a bushel, if you travel ten miles; a pound is not a pound, if you go from a goldsmith to a grocer; nor a gallon a gallon, if you go from an alehouse to a tavern. What purpose does this variety serve? or what necessity is there, which the difference of price would not better answer and supply? *Do not these observations merit legislative attention, when other regulations are taken into consideration?*

According to the *Chronicon Preciosum*, the price of wheat was so cheap as 4*s.* or 6*s.* of our money per quarter, and all other necessaries were proportionably cheap; so that it is probable the difference of living between part of Henry the VII's reign and our times might have been four times cheaper, and then the price of wheat would be equivalent to 24*s.* per quarter in our times.

By Madox's *Formulare Anglicanum*, p. 110, we find the lady Anne, daughter of Edward IV. sister to Elizabeth the queen of Henry VII. who was married to the lord Howard, eldest son of the earl of Surry, had an allowance of 20*s.* per week for her exhibition, sustentation, and convenient diet of meat and drink; also for two gentlewomen, one woman child, one gentleman, one yeoman, and three grooms, in all eight persons, 5*l.* 11*s.* 8*d.* per annum, for their wages, diet, and clothing, by the year; and for the maintenance of seven horses, yearly,

A. D. 16l. 9s. 4d. that is, for each horse 2l. 7s. 0½d. yearly—
money being then one and a half heavier than our coin.

According to the Chronicon Preciosum, wheat was the
same year 3s. 4d. per quarter, and a barrel of white her-
rings was then sold at 3s. 4d.

1512. By the statute 3d of Henry VIII. cap. 8. recites 12th
of Edward II. anno Domini 1319; which is as follows;
viz. "That no officer, who by virtue of his office was
" bound to keep the assizes of wines and victuals, shall,
" during his office, sell wines or victuals either by whole-
" sale or retail."

" Now (says the first-named act) sithen the making
" of which statute, many and the most parts of all the
" cities, burghs, and towns corporate, within the realms
" of England, be fallen in ruin and decay, and not inha-
" bited with merchants and men of such substances as
" were at the time of making the aforesaid statutes; for
" at this day the dwellers and inhabitants of the same ci-
" ties and burghs be mostly bakers, brewers, vintners, fish-
" mongers, and other victuallers, and few or no other
" persons or substance be within many of the said cities
" and burghs at this day able to bear office within the
" same, and to content, answer, and pay unto the king's
" grace his fee-farm, wherewith they (*i. e.* the cities and
" burghs) be charged."

It was now enacted, for the ease, comfort, and relief of
the aforesaid poor cities, burghs, and towns corporate,—
" that whensoever, and as often as any victualler is chosen
" to bear any office which should have the assizing and
" correction for the selling of victuals, that then two dis-
" crete and honest persons of the same city or burgh, not
" being victuallers, shall be chosen by the commonalty of
" the same city or burgh; which two persons, jointly with
" the said officer, shall be sworn to set the assizes or prices

" of victuals during the said victualler's office: and then A. D.
" it shall be lawful for the said victualler in office to
" sell wines and victuals by wholesale or retail. Pro-
" vided that this act shall not extend to discharge any
" minister (aforesaid) of the cities of London, York, and
" Coventry, for any wine or victuals to be sold by retail
" within the said cities."

Recites a law made (in the 4th of Henry VII. cap. 19.)
" against decaying houses of husbandry, or not laying
" of convenient land for the maintenance of the same."

The same evil still prevailed; that is, much arable land
was inclosed and turned into pasture.

A fresh law was therefore made in the fourth year of
king Henry VIII. cap. 5. importing, " That whosoever 1516.
" decayeth any town or house of husbandry, or shall con-
" vert tillage into pasture, shall forfeit to the lord of the
" fee half the profit thereof." Yet this not being thought
sufficient, the next year an act of the seventh of this king,
cap. 1. was made, " That if any person shall decay a town,
" a hamlet, or house of husbandry, or convert tillage into
" pasture, the immediate lord of the fee shall have the moiety
" of the offender's land until the offence be reformed."
These foregoing acts plainly demonstrate the humour of
people in those times in favour of pasturage; and it is evi-
dent the legislature perceived the danger of suffering it to
increase, by the enacting of those laws.

By a statute of the 25th of Henry VIII. cap. 13. to 1534.
prevent the custom of engrossing a great number of sheep
into one man's hands, it was enacted,

" I. That none shall keep above two thousand four
" hundred sheep, exclusive of lambs, at any one time,
" unless it be on his own lands of inheritance, in which
" case he is not hereby limited, nor are spiritual per-
" sons."

A. D. 1548. **II.** No man shall hold above two farms : in the parish of one of which two he shall be obliged to live and reside himself."

A statute was made in the second and third of Edw. VI. cap. 15. "For restraining the sellers of all manner of provision in England from combining together, not to sell but at a fixed price."

By the fifth and sixth of Edward VI. cap. 14. it was enacted, "That whosoever should buy any corn or grain with intent to sell it again, should be reputed an unlawful engrosser; and should, for the first fault, suffer two months' imprisonment, and forfeit the value of the corn; for the second suffer six months' imprisonment, and forfeit double the value; and, for the third, be set in the pillory, suffer imprisonment during the king's pleasure, and forfeit all his goods and chattels."

Our ancestors, by this system, endeavoured to prevent, as much as possible, any *middle man* of any kind from coming in between the *grower* and *consumer*; and this was the meaning of the many restraints which they imposed upon the trade of those whom they called kidders or carriers of corn, a trade which nobody was allowed to exercise without a licence ascertaining his qualifications as a man of probity and fair dealing.

1560. But even this restraint was afterwards thought insufficient; and, by a statute of Elizabeth, the privilege of granting licences was confirmed to the quarter-sessions. The ancient policy of England endeavoured in this manner to regulate agriculture by maxims quite different from those which it established with regard to manufactures, by leaving the farmers no other customers but either the consumers or their immediate factors.

Wheat was this year 5*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.* per quarter—an enormous price! A. D. 1597.

Monopolies being very numerous, they were petitioned against to the house of commons; whereupon, before queen Elizabeth was actually addressed, she readily annulled most of the grants, leaving the rest to the due course of the law. 1601.

In 1603 king James issued a proclamation *for annulling several monopolies*; and at the opening of his first parliament spoke sharply against them, although he afterwards gave great encouragement to them. 1603.

By a statute of the first year of king James I. cap. 25. "When wheat is not above one pound six shillings and eight-pence per quarter; rye, pease, and beans fifteen shillings; and barley and malt fourteen shillings per quarter; they may be exported in English ships, paying custom two shillings per quarter for wheat, and one shilling and four-pence for the other kinds."

King James I. now issued a proclamation, wherein he observes, "That in times of dearth the poorer sort of his people are pinched with great want and dear prices of corn; that the treasure of the kingdom, also, in those times is much exhausted in providing of corn from foreign parts; and on the contrary, in times of plenty, the farmers, by the low prices of corn, are hardly able to support their necessary charge and pay their rents;—and foreseeing, as well by reason as by example of foreign nations, that such things may not only in some good measure be remedied, but also the increase of tillage may be procured and the better vending of our native commodities, strength to our shipping; and the breeding of many mariners, by the erecting of magazines of corn, which in times of scarcity may serve to keep down the price of foreign corn; and in times of plenty may keep

A. D. " up the price of our home corn, at such reasonable
" rates as will well maintain the husbandman's labour,
" and hold up the gentleman's rents ;—upon deliberate
" advice with our privy council, we ordain, 1. That
" magazines of corn shall be erected, &c. &c."

In the year 1624, and in the twenty-first of the
reign of king James I. there was an act of parliament,
" Whereby all monopolies, and all commissions, grants,
" licences, and charters, formerly made or granted, or
" shall hereafter be granted, either to persons or corpo-
" rations, for the sole buying, selling, making, working,
" or using of any thing, are made void, &c. &c.—and
" also, that all such monopolies shall be henceforth
" for ever tried and determined by the common law of
" this realm, and not otherwise. And all persons are
" hereby disabled to use any monopoly ; and persons ag-
" grieved thereby shall recover treble damages, and dou-
" ble costs."

1624. By an act of parliament of the twenty-first of king
James I. cap. 28. it was enacted, " That when wheat is
" not above one pound twelve shillings per quarter ;
" rye twenty shillings per quarter ; peas, beans, barley, and
" malt, sixteen shillings at the port whither they are
" brought to be exported, they may then be exported,"
and a similar act of the third of king Charles I. cap. 4. in
the year 1627, granted such licence, and fixed the same rate.

1630. In 1630 there was a proclamation of king Charles,
wherein he takes notice of the abuses committed by en-
groffers, badgers, broghers, and buyers of corn.

The purport of this proclamation was to lessen the
consumption of provisions, by a strict observance of
Lent, &c.

In this year also king Charles most laudably commis-
sions a number of his great officers of state " to in-

" quire into the fishery on the British coasts, how the A. D.
" same may be rendered more beneficial to the nation, by
" framing a general fishery company, composed of some
" of each of his three kingdoms ; for which end he here-
" in premises to issue like commissions to Scotland and
" Ireland."

In the eighteenth year of king Charles II. cap. 2. pro- 1666.
hibiting the importation of lean or fat cattle, &c.

A proof how little we then stood in need of fo-
reign aid, wheat was, in this year, at one pound sixteen
shillings per quarter according to the Chronicon Preci-
osum.

Wheat, this year, at two pounds one shilling and eight- 1670.
pence per quarter, according to the Chronicon Preci-
osum.

By an act of parliament of the twenty-second of king
Charles II. cap. 13. it was enacted, " That when wheat
" was not above two pounds thirteen shillings and four
" pence per quarter, it should, upon exportation, pay
" custom and poundage per quarter, viz.

	£.	s.	d.
" From that price to four pounds per quarter	0	16	0
" Rye, at about two pounds, to pay - - -	0	8	0
" Barley and malt, not above one pound twelve			
" shillings, to pay - - - - -	0	16	0
" Oats, at sixteen shillings per quarter, to pay	0	5	4
" Peas and beans, at two pounds, to pay - - -	0	16	0

By an act of parliament this year, in the first session of
the first year of king William and queen Mary, cap. 22. 1689.
it was enacted, " That when malt, or barley is, at one
" pound four shillings per quarter, or under ; rye at one
" pound twelve shillings, and wheat at two pounds eight
" shillings per quarter ; then it shall not only be lawful to

A. D. " export the same, but the exporters shall also receive the following bounties; viz. For malt or barley per quarter two shillings and six-pence, rye three shillings and six-pence, wheat five shillings per quarter, without requiring any thing for customs or fees whatever, provided security be given for such corn being legally landed beyond sea, and that the ship and its crew, in which it shall be exported, be duly qualified according to the acts of navigation."

This was the first law for allowing any bounty on corn exported, which bounties have in general been deemed so beneficial to the landed interest, by enabling tenants to pay their rents in years of plenty, that, unless in years of scarcity, when the current prices were higher than the above-named ones, it has been judged prudent to continue the same. How much this bounty contributed to the improvement of husbandry is too obvious to be disputed*; yet some are of opinion, that, instead hereof, all the corn of plentiful years should, by the public, be purchased of the farmers at a moderate price, to be laid up in granaries against a year of dearth. This would not only be a great help to our poor in a year of scarcity, but would bring foreign ships to purchase it at our price, and would also employ great numbers of our own ships for supplying other nations, at higher rates, as is done in Holland.

1700. In the 11th year of king William an act of parliament passed, cap. 20. for taking away the duties upon our woollen manufactures, corn, grain, bread, biscuit, and meal exported; so that from thenceforth no manner of duty was to be paid on our exported woollen goods, on our corn and grain of all kinds, as also of our meal, malt, pulse, and bread exported.

The bishop of Ely, in his *Chronicon Preciosum*, gives of himself an opinion for that of 1700, whether it was beneficial? Will not a bounty on production be still more beneficial?

the true market price of wheat and malt for sixty years, *i. e.* from 1646 to 1705, both inclusive. The highest price of wheat was four pounds five shillings per quarter in the year 1648; and of malt, in the year 1659, two pounds eight shillings and eightpence;—and the lowest price of wheat, in all that period, was one pound five shillings and twopence in the year 1687, and of malt, in 1681, seventeen shillings and fourpence. Those of 1705 were one pound ten shillings for wheat, and one pound six shillings for malt. Medium for wheat, between those two prices, is two pounds fifteen shillings and a penny; medium for malt, between those two prices, is one pound thirteen shillings.

The bishop observes, first, That there are two prices of corn in every year, viz. that at Lady-day and that at Christmas, both which he put together, and took half of the sum for the common price of that whole year.

Secondly, Of the first twenty years of the said sixty years, the price of wheat was two pounds seventeen shillings and fivepence halfpenny, and of malt one pound twelve shillings and three farthings, per quarter.

Thirdly, For the second twenty years, from 1666 to 1685, wheat two pounds six shillings and threepence three farthings, and malt one pound five shillings and threepence three farthings.

Fourthly, In the last twenty years, viz. from 1686 to 1705, wheat two pounds five shillings and ninepence three farthings, and malt one pound five shillings and fivepence farthing.

Fifthly, One year with another, for the said sixty years, wheat was two pounds nine shillings and tenpence halfpenny, and malt one pound seven shillings and sevenpence farthing.

A similar fluctuation in the rates of corn is ever to be

A. D. expected, and has accordingly happened down to our own times.

1710. In the 8th Anne, chap. 18. is the following preamble: —“Whereas, the statute of the fifty-first year of king Henry III. in the year 1266, intituled, *Affize Panis et Cerevisie*, (i. e. for settling the affize of bread and ale,) being now obscure and otherwise impracticable for modern times, the poorer sort of people more especially had since been deceived and oppressed by an almost total neglect, in many places, of the due affize and reasonable price of bread;” for remedy whereof, and that a plain and constant rule and method may henceforward be duly observed and kept in the making and affizing of the several sorts of bread made for sale, therefore it was enacted, “That so much of the statute of the said fifty-first year of Henry III. as relates to the affize of bread, be repealed; and that, from the 1st of May 1710, the court of the lord-mayor and aldermen of London and its liberties, or the lord-mayor alone, by the order of the said court, and the mayor, bailiffs, aldermen, and other chief magistrates of any other city or towns corporate, and two or more justices of the peace in such places where there shall be no such mayor, &c. shall respectively, and from time to time, ascertain and appoint, within their respective jurisdictions, the affize and weight of all sorts of bread to be sold by any baker or other person whatsoever, having respect to the price which the grain, meal, or flour, whereof such bread shall be made, shall bear in the several public markets in or about the city, town corporate, burgh, or place, where such affize shall be so set, making reasonable allowance to the bakers for their charges, pains, and livelihoods; the said affize to be set in avoirdupois weight, &c.

1736. In this year an account was laid before the British

house of commons of the several sorts and quantities of corn which had been exported from England between Christmas 1734 and Christmas 1735, with the total of the bounty thereon; viz.

	2s.		£.
Barley - -	57,520	Bounty - -	7,190
Malt - -	219,781	Ditto - -	26,434
Oatmeal - -	1,921	Ditto - -	240
Rye - -	1,329	Ditto - -	232
Wheat - -	153,343	Ditto - -	38,335

Total number of quarters of the several kinds of corn was 433,894 quarters.—Total bounty paid, 72,431 pounds.

Prices of Grain at Mark-Lane and Bear-Key for Fifteen successive Years.

Years.	Wheat.		Barley.		Oats.	
	s.	s.	s.	s.	s.	s. d.
1742 - -	26	to 29	15	to 20	12	to 15
1743 - -	20	— 23	15	— 20	13	— 16
1744 - -	19	— 21	11	— 13	9	— 12
1745 - -	18	— 20	12	— 15	12	— 16
1746 - -	17	— 24	10	— 13	12	— 14
1747 - -	27	— 30	8	— 12	7	— 11
1748 - -	26	— 28	13	— 14	9	— 12
1749 - -	27	— 32	17	— 18	14	— 16
1750 - -	24	— 27	14	— 17	12	— 13
1751 - -	24	— 27	14	— 17	12	— 13
1752 - -	20	— 25	10	— 13	9	— 11
1753 - -	29	— 35	17	— 18	10	— 12
1754 - -	27	— 33	17	— 19	12	— 13
1755 - -	24	— 26	12	— 14	10	— 13
1756 - -	22	— 26	14	— 15	12	— 13 6

A. D. 1757. The year 1757 proved to be an extremely scarce year all over Europe, not only for wheat corn but for various other kind of provisions, whereby the poor of Great Britain suffered not a little for their daily sustenance, and even persons of middling circumstances were put to a considerable additional expence, many graziers, butchers, bakers, fish-mongers, &c. taking, we fear, too much advantage of the general dearth.

And as three shillings and sixpence per bushel, or one pound eight shillings per quarter, is deemed a low or cheap price for wheat, and that five shillings per bushel, or forty shillings per quarter, has usually been deemed the medium or middling price, we shall here exhibit the rates of wheat at London in every month of the said year of dearth, 1757, as sold at the Corn Exchange in Mark-Lane; viz.

	£. s. d.	£. s. d.
In Jan. 1757, per quarter, Wheat from	2 9 0	to 2 10 0
February	from 2 7 0	to 2 11 0
March	from 2 6 0	to 2 14 0
April		3 4 0
May		3 4 0
June	from 3 7 0	to 3 12 0
July		2 18 0
August		1 14 0
September		2 8 0
October		2 6 6
November		2 2 0
December		2 2 0

For the remedying of that evil, many expedients were debated both within and without doors, which at length produced the following statutes of the said thirtieth year of George II. viz.

I. "An act to prohibit, for a time to be limited, the exportation of corn, malt, meal and flour, bread, biscuit, and starch. A. D.

II. "An act to discontinue, for a limited time, the duties upon corn and flour imported, &c.

III. "An act to prohibit the exportation of corn, grain, meal, malt, flour, beef, pork, bacon, &c. from America, unless to Great Britain or Ireland, and to permit the importation thereof into Great Britain and Ireland in neutral ships, &c.

IV. "An act for continuing the last-named act for discontinuing the duties upon corn and flour imported, &c.

V. "Also an act for continuing an act of this same session, to prohibit, for a limited time, the making of low wines and spirits from wheat, barley, malt, &c. or from any meal or flour."

By a statute of the session of parliament, 31 Geo. II. an act was passed for the due making of bread, and to regulate the price and assize thereof; and to punish persons who shall adulterate meal, flour, or bread. This act was principally occasioned by accounts daily published of certain bakers mixing lime, alum, and other unwholesome ingredients, in that time of scarcity, in their bread. The legislature therefore took the matter into their serious consideration; and took this opportunity, likewise, of examining an act of the fifty-first of king Henry III, intituled, *Affiza Panis et Cerevisie*, i. e. the Affize of Bread and Ale; and another act of the eighth year of queen Anne, to regulate the price and assize of bread, whereby so much of the before-named act, as related to the assize of bread, was repealed; which act of queen Anne, with several alterations and amendments made thereto by some subsequent acts, was continued until the 24th of June, 1757, and to the end of the then next session of parliament. 1758.

A. D. This present statute, therefore, reduced into one act all the several laws in force relating to the due making, and the prices and affize of bread; all preceding statutes being hereby repealed, and new tables for the affize and prices of the various kind of bread were therein promulgated, as also what relates to the prices of the three sorts of wheat, wheat-en and household flour, of rye and rye-meal, of barley and barley-meal, of oats and oatmeal, of white peas, and white peas' flour or meal, and of beans and bean-flour.

Several clauses were also added for preventing frauds in the prices of corn, flour and meal, and for punishing of any bakers who shall mix different sorts of flour or meal in their bread, or shall put into their bread any unwholesome ingredients.

1765. A bill to enable his majesty, with the consent of the privy council, to prohibit the exportation of corn, during the recess of parliament, received the royal assent in the parliamentary session of this year.

And also another to allow the free importation of corn, and to discontinue the bounty on corn exported.

1767. A bill to continue for a further limited time the free importation of wheat and wheat-meal from any part of Europe, and to discontinue the duties payable on the importation of barley-meal and pulse, received the royal assent this session of Parliament.

Also another for empowering his majesty to permit the importation of corn, duty-free, for a further limited time.

The quantity of corn brought into the port of London, between the 3d of March and the 2d of July, in consequence of the different acts passed for the importation of that necessary article, amounted to 115,497 quarters.

1770. A bill received the royal assent this year for registering

the prices at which corn is sold in the several counties of Great Britain. The preamble to this act only suggests that a register of the prices at which corn is sold in the several counties of Great Britain will be of public and general advantage, for which reason the justices of the peace for each county in Great Britain are required, at their quarter-sessions next after September 29, annually to direct returns to be made weekly of the prices of wheat, rye, barley, oats, and beans, from so many market-towns within their respective counties as they shall think proper, not being less than two, nor more than six, and to appoint a proper person to send the same to a person to be appointed to receive them; and in case such person shall die, neglect his duty, or become incapable of performing it, any two justices acting for the county may appoint another till the next quarter-sessions, at which the justices may either confirm such appointment or choose another.—By this act, the meal-weighers of the city of London are to take an account of the prices at the markets within the said city, and return the average weekly to the person appointed to receive the same. “The justices for each county shall cause also a standard Winchester bushel of eight gallons to be kept at every market-town from whence such returns shall be made; and such returns shall be the average prices by the customary measure of each respective market, and also by that Winchester bushel.

“By this act the lord high-treasurer is empowered to appoint a fit person to receive the returns at the treasury, and to enter them fairly in a book kept for that purpose. And all exports and imports of grain from and into Great Britain, with the bounties paid and received thereon, to be transmitted annually to the same person, and registered in proper books by the person appointed to re-

ceive the returns of the prices from the several counties. It was enacted to continue in force for seven years."

An ACCOUNT of the Average Price of CORN in ENGLAND and WALES, by the Standard Winchester Bushel, for Eight Years, from the Commencement of the Corn-Register Act in the Year 1770.

YEAR.	Wheat.	Rye.	Barley.	Oats.	Beans.
	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.
1771	5 10 $\frac{1}{2}$	4 3 $\frac{1}{2}$	3 2 $\frac{1}{2}$	2 1	3 6 $\frac{3}{4}$
1772	6 4	4 7	3 2	2 0 $\frac{1}{4}$	3 9
1773	6 4 $\frac{1}{2}$	4 2	3 6 $\frac{1}{2}$	2 1 $\frac{1}{4}$	4 1 $\frac{1}{2}$
1774	6 7	4 3 $\frac{1}{2}$	3 6 $\frac{3}{4}$	2 2 $\frac{3}{4}$	3 10 $\frac{3}{4}$
1775	6 0 $\frac{1}{2}$	4 1 $\frac{1}{4}$	3 3	2 0 $\frac{3}{4}$	3 7
1776	4 9 $\frac{1}{4}$	3 4 $\frac{1}{4}$	2 6 $\frac{1}{4}$	1 10 $\frac{1}{2}$	3 3 $\frac{3}{4}$
1777	5 8 $\frac{1}{4}$	3 6	2 6 $\frac{3}{4}$	1 11 $\frac{1}{2}$	3 6 $\frac{3}{4}$
1778	5 3	3 6 $\frac{1}{2}$	2 10	1 10 $\frac{3}{4}$	3 5 $\frac{1}{2}$
Average of the 8 Years.	5 10 $\frac{1}{2}$	3 11 $\frac{3}{4}$	3 1	2 0 $\frac{1}{2}$	3 8

The prices of the finest and coarsest sorts of grain generally exceed, and reduce the average price as follows; viz.

Per bushel—wheat, 6d.; rye, 3d.; barley, 3d.; oats, 3d.; beans, 6d.

The following TABLE will show the Quantity of WHEAT and FLOUR exported from 1779 to 1786.

YEAR.	The Article.	British Qrs.	Foreign do.	Import. do.
1779.	Wheat, wheat-meal, and wheat-flour, exported this year was	203,189	9,576	4,611

Bounty paid on exportation was 54,506l. 2s. 6d.

Average — wheat, 4s. 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ d.; rye, 2s. 11d.; barley, 2s. 5d $\frac{1}{4}$.; oats, 1s. 9d.; beans, 3s. 0 $\frac{1}{4}$ d.; per standard Winchester bushel.

YEAR.	The Article.	British Qrs.	Foreign do.	Import. do.
1780.	British wheat, and wheat-flour	200,179	7,999	3,040
	From Scotland	15,874	Ditto	873

Bounties and drawbacks on corn exported, 77,745l. 14s. 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ d.

Average price of corn in England and Wales, by the standard Winchester bushel, as follows:

Wheat, 4s. 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ d.; rye, 2s. 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ d.; barley, 2s. 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ d.; oats, 1s. 7 $\frac{1}{4}$ d.; beans, 2s. 9 $\frac{1}{4}$ d.

YEAR.	Wheat.	Rye.	Barley.	Oats.	Beans.
	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.
1781	5 7	3 4½	2 1¼	8½	2 10½
1782	5 11¼	3 7¼	2 9¾	1 10¾	3 3
1783	6 7	4 5½	3 9½	2 5¾	4 4¼
1784	6 1¼	4 0¼	3 5¾	2 3½	4 0¼
1785	5 2¾	3 6	3 0	2 1¾	3 10
1786	4 10¼	3 4¾	3 0½	2 3	4 1¾

It may, perhaps, be worth attention, that, from the Restoration to the present æra, the tonnage of British trading shipping increased from ninety-five thousand two hundred and sixty-six tons to more than twelve hundred thousand tons; the number of vessels constituting such tonnage amounting to seventeen thousand two hundred and ninety-five, and navigated by near one hundred and thirty thousand men and boys!

A prodigious increase in little more than one hundred and thirty years!

The ANNUAL PRODUCT of the under-mentioned MANUFACTURES in 1780 was calculated in the following Manner:

Woollen	£.16,800,000
Leather	10,500,000
Flax	1,750,000
Hemp	890,000
Glass	630,000
Paper	780,000
Porcelain	1,000,000
Silk	3,350,000
Cotton	960,000
Lead	1,650,000
Tin	1,000,000
Iron	8,700,000
Steel-plating	3,400,000
Total	£.51,410,000

The iron, glass, and porcelain, then on a rapid increase.

Tin and leather declining.

Paper increasing.

Flax rather falling.

Hemp stationary.

Silk rather increasing.

His Grace of Portland is said to be in possession of a calculation that makes the fabrics employ 5,250,000 souls!—Since the above well-authenticated document was published, an amazing increase has taken place in all the manufactures.

From the accounts of the Irish fishery in this year, we find that the herrings came upon the north-west coast of Ireland about the last week in June, and continued until about the last week in September. At first they were of small size, but increased considerably; and latterly they were large, but by no means the size of the winter herrings. It is almost impossible to make any kind of satisfactory conjecture of the numbers that were taken. There was, for a considerable part of that time, no other demand than from the country about thirty miles round; while the take was so very great, and the demand so small, that incredible numbers were thrown away; and, upon an average price for a month, they did not exceed 10d. per thousand. The number was at times so great, that 4d. 5d. or 6d. was the price of a horse-load, and there was no restriction as to the load. They were boiled for oil, the price of which was 10d. per gallon, and was very good for lamps. This kind of oil was much used by carriers. The number of boats employed in the herring-fishery was from 70 to 100; and during the height of the season each boat could have taken, at least, as many more as they did, as it was seldom necessary to shoot their nets more than once for the boat-load. As to the sum each boat made, it is said to be about 54*l.*; and, computing the price of herrings to be 20d. per thousand, each boat took 648,000, which, multiplied by 70 (the lowest number of boats employed), makes the number amount to 45,360,000, exclusive of what were boiled for oil and thrown away. It may not, perhaps, be improper to observe in this place, that the supposition of herrings taken in July, August, and September, being incapable of a proper state of curing on account of their very extraordinary richness, is founded in

error, as it appears from experiment, that, if a sufficient quantity of salt is used, they may be preserved as well as the winter herrings; but by not taking proper care, and an injudicious saving of salt, the commodity has been brought into disrepute.

Year	Month	Quantity	Price	Total
1780	June	100000	10	1000000
1781	July	120000	12	1440000
1782	August	150000	15	2250000
1783	September	180000	18	3240000
1784	October	200000	20	4000000
1785	November	220000	22	4840000
1786	December	240000	24	5760000
1787	January	260000	26	6760000
1788	February	280000	28	7840000
1789	March	300000	30	9000000
1790	April	320000	32	10240000
1791	May	340000	34	11560000
1792	June	360000	36	12960000
1793	July	380000	38	14440000
1794	August	400000	40	16000000
1795	September	420000	42	17640000
1796	October	440000	44	19360000
1797	November	460000	46	21160000
1798	December	480000	48	23040000
1799	January	500000	50	25000000
1800	February	520000	52	27040000
1801	March	540000	54	29160000
1802	April	560000	56	31360000
1803	May	580000	58	33640000
1804	June	600000	60	36000000
1805	July	620000	62	38440000
1806	August	640000	64	40960000
1807	September	660000	66	43560000
1808	October	680000	68	46240000
1809	November	700000	70	49000000
1810	December	720000	72	51840000
1811	January	740000	74	54760000
1812	February	760000	76	57760000
1813	March	780000	78	60840000
1814	April	800000	80	64000000
1815	May	820000	82	67240000
1816	June	840000	84	70560000
1817	July	860000	86	73960000
1818	August	880000	88	77440000
1819	September	900000	90	81000000
1820	October	920000	92	84640000
1821	November	940000	94	88360000
1822	December	960000	96	92160000
1823	January	980000	98	96040000
1824	February	1000000	100	100000000

An Account

AN ACCOUNT of the Variations in the Rate of Duty on Corn-Wash, from Midsummer 1749 to Midsummer 1786, calculated from the respective Variations in the Duties on low Wines and Spirits; together with an Account of the average Quantity of Spirits annually made, and the average Amount of the Duties annually collected, under each Rate.

YEARS.	Average Quantity of Spirits annually made.	Rate per Gallon of the Wash.	Aver. Amount of the Duties annually collected.
	GALLONS.	d.	£. s.
1750	6,571,305	1 $\frac{3}{4}$	319,321 0
1751			
1753	4,548,800	2 $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{2}{10}$	353,758 0
1754			
1755			
1756			
1761	2,714,119	6 $\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{2}{10}$	474,957 0
1763			
1764			
1765			
1766			
1768			
1769			
1770			
1771	2,180,019	7	423,712 11
1772			
1773			
1774			
1775			
1776			
1777	An additional duty was imposed in the year 1751; but no spirits subject to that duty were made till the year 1752. In March, 1757, the making of spirits from corn was prohibited: the prohibition ended in April 1760.		
1778			
1779			
1781	2,299,493	7 $\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{8}{10}$	489,787 16
1782			
1783	1,438,442	8 $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{42}{100}$	529,096 16
1784			
1785	3,014,784	5	314,040 0
1786	4,106,314	5	427,741 0

Exclusive of two five-per-cents. viz. that of April 6, 1779, and April 6, 1781; including the two five-per-cents of 1779 and 1781.
Including three five-per-cents. the last of which was imposed July 26, 1782.

Having stated the fluctuation in the price of grain and provisions, from the Norman conquest to within the last fifteen years, it is unnecessary to trouble the reader with further accounts, which he may inspect every day, and which are probably within the memory of every one who may read this pamphlet.

What I have placed before him at one view may be found extremely useful as well as entertaining, especially as I have introduced some miscellaneous matters, which may prove infructive to those who have neither leisure nor opportunity to consult the several authors I have compiled that part of my work from. An attentive perusal will evince that *establishing granaries for corn, controuling the markets* for other articles of subsistence, employing a greater number of boats for sea and river fishery, and granting bounties for procuring supplies on cheaper terms, formed no immaterial part of the policy of our ancestors, and may well deserve imitation.

THE END.

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ON

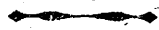
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